■ Sports/A19
Rosales settles for 5th in last LPGA tournament

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Death toll from 'Unding' rises to 29

Tanong ng Bayan/A16
Gulo sa Hacienda Luisita, sino ang may sala?

When a pork lover is a croc or a lizard

By Carlos Pobo

MOM A congressman in search for pork barrel is thinking of hiding in Subic Bay. Manuel "Boy Kawit" Zamora (Cavite, Indep...

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Luisita faction rejects new vote on stock scheme

CTMEE leaders at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac City yesterday rejected a proposal of Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III for the stock distribution scheme at the sugar plantation to be put to a vote again by farmers of the sugar estate.

The dissenting Hacienda workers belong to Asociasyon Lusaita and the Nakasurot Kayo sa Diosdado United Luisita Workers Union (UNwu)

November 22, 2004 ■ 32 pages | vol. 19 | no. 249

website: www.inq7.net

No budget approval, no ₱35-M pork barrel

By Carlos Pobo

GMA popularity falls to lowest level

WARM At the traditional Chilean poncho, Apec leaders pit roadside their group shot at the Palacio de La Moneda in Santiago. They are (from left, first row) New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Elizabeth Clark, Chilean President Ricardo Lagos Escobar, Philippine President Maria Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Chinese President Hu Jintao. (behind (from left) are US President George W. Bush, Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Joseph Martin.

Pulse Asia cites price increases for decline

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Apec leaders back new antiterror plans

By Cynthia D. Balana

NEWLY elected UP president Emerlinda Roman receives a hug from a supporter

UP regents break deadlock, select 1st woman president

By Dona Z. Pazolagan

Be watchdogs, not puppies, PDI founder tells journalists

By Dona Pazolagan

ASIAN PRINT AWARDS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Sex video not enough evidence vs gay major

There must be a complainant, says Army chief

By Pia B. Zamora

THE VIDEO tape showing Army Maj. Ferdinand Ramos having homosexual sex with a military recruit is not enough evidence to file charges against the officer, Army chief Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga said yesterday.

"The complainants have not come forward. We are asking them to come forward," Senga said.

An unnamed military recruit had accused Ramos, chief of the Army's Civil Military Operations at Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac, of soliciting sexual favors from soldier-trainees at the camp. The recruit provided a copy of a video showing the act.

The video was played on national television on Monday night.

If proven true, Ramos would face court-martial for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, a violation of Article of War 96.

But for the next in prompt, Senga said, there must be a complaint.

"The victim went to the media and we are waiting for him to come to us so that we can begin the investigation," Senga said in protest.

He said Ramos has been "restricted to quarters so that he cannot do anything anymore that is unbecoming and so that he will immediately be investigation."

The sex scandal involving Ramos broke just as court-martial proceedings were started against Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, former retired bureau comptroller, who is facing charges of amassing unexplained wealth estimated P45-billion.

The latest military scandal has also sparked a fresh round of new jokes about the Philippine Military Academy, from critics to graduates, dating back to 1946 and Garcia in 1971.

One told jabs went, "Evolution of the PMA: yesterday, Philippine Military Academy; today, Philippine Multisexual Academy; tomorrow, Philippine Metrosexuals Academy."

The "millionaires" reference was to Garcia.

Another 1968 graduate, Col. George Rabusa, is also under investigation for alleged unexplained wealth amounting to P68 million.

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Buenaventura is 'Management Man of the Year'

By Doris C. Dumlao

MANDALUYONG, Philippines — Ramon Buenaventura, president and chief executive officer of Philippine National Bank, has been chosen "Management Man of the Year" for 2004 by the Management Association of the Philippines.

MAP selected the prestigious award to individuals in business or government who attain unquestioned distinction in the practice of management, and for their contributions to the country's development and progress.

MAP president Leonardo Babaoge, in a letter to Buenaventura yesterday, announced the reasons for the 66-year-old MAP chief was given the honor, citing his achievements as an internationally acclaimed banker and farmer-turned-engineer.

Buenaventura, Babaoge said, "has consistently demonstrated the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and excellence in management and leadership."

Babaoge said Buenaventura's leadership in banking has resulted in:

- Consistently strong operational results and profitability in turbulent times;
- Increasing the bank's capitalization and net worth;
- Improving the bank's asset quality;
- Expanding the bank's network of branches and automated teller machines;
- Introducing innovative products and services; and
- Developing the bank's human resources.

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- Introducing innovative products and services; and
- Developing the bank's human resources.

The other reasons cited by MAP for the award were:

- His strategic operational, risk and ability to transcend political amid overwhelming pressures;
- His strong leadership in reducing the banking industry;
- For ensuring the stability of the peso and for addressing currency speculation by correctly regulating excessive exporting of dollar trades;
- His key role in efforts to assist the sustained development of the country's economy through the modernization of the banking system;
- For pursuing innovative proposals to revitalize the banking and capacity building within the BSP and the banking sector; and
- For upholding the values of integrity, excellence, resolve and fairness throughout his management career.

Buenaventura, whose term ends next year, was the chief central bank governor to be honored by the MAP after Gabriel Singson (1998) and Jaime Ongpin (1999).

The most recent awardees were Hunters Development Bank's Jose Fontanilla (2003); Jollibee Foods Corp.'s Tony Tan Caktiong (2002); Bacnotan Holdings Corp.'s Dr. Cesar Lopez (2000), and ISM group's Henry Sy Sr. (1999).

No interpellation for sin tax bill at Senate

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE majority yesterday decided to dispense with its interpellation of Senate Committee Report No. 5, which seeks higher tobacco and alcohol taxes, in order to "expedite" the passage of the "sin" taxes.

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said he decided to do away with the interpellation was arrived at on a closed-door caucus of administration senators, prompting Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile to accuse Malacañang of muzzling the chamber in order to get the legislation passed without much debate.

But Pangilinan told reporters the senators could still "raise clarificatory questions during the period of amendments."

Senate President Franklin Drilon was also quick to defend the decision, saying that "whatever or interpellations the majority will make will be part of a proposed amendment, if any."

But Enrile said President Macapagal-Arroyo might as well pushed the Senate if she wanted to have administration measures passed without any opposition.

"Of course, I can understand the majority. They are not interested in conducting a thorough discussion of this proposal. But we will discuss it. We owe it to the nation and to the people as a whole not to bring out the issues. If we're going to do that [no interpellation], we might as well shut up the Senate," Enrile said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who did not attend the caucus, said later on the Senate floor that she had been itching to interpellate the Malacañang-backed measure.

Senate ways and means committee and principal sponsor of the committee report.

The report, which seeks up to a 200-percent increase in "sin" taxes by 2011 in order to generate P134 billion in revenues, was signed and endorsed for plenary debate by 14 members of the 18-man committee.

The other senators who signed the committee report were Senate President Franklin Drilon, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Ramon Revilla Jr., Panfilo Lacson, Manuel Villar Jr., Jinggoy Estrada, Alfredo Lim, Gregorio Honasan, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Ralph Recto and Loren Legarda.

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Jinggoy denies 'jueteng' links but affirms ties to Bong Pineda wife

By Armand N. Nocum

A SMILING and cocky Sen. Jinggoy Estrada yesterday went to distance himself and his father, ousted President Joseph Estrada, from "jueteng," but he only succeeded in affirming his close ties to the wife of a suspected "jueteng lord" and admitting that he had filed a bill to legalize the illegal numbers game.

During cross-examination by his and his father's plunder trial, the young Estrada admitted having gone to Sydney, Australia, to watch the 2000 Olympic Games with Lubos (Pampanga) Mayor Lilia Pineda, the wife of suspected jueteng lord Bong Pineda.

Testifying as the ninth defense witness, Estrada said the trip was a "personal" one to cheer up Pineda's children. He said he was accompanied by officials of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP), which he headed, and which counted Lilia Pineda among its officers.

"It's a good friend of Mayor Pineda," he said.

Asked if he was aware of the Pineda alleged links to jueteng, Estrada said that he was, having watched Bong Pineda being grilled in Congress on the operations of the illegal numbers game in Pampanga, Bulacan and other areas. But he said he was too close to Mr. Pineda.

When Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio asked him if during his term as the San Juan mayor he tried to eradicate jueteng, he said that it was not his "mandate to do that," the matter being the responsibility of the police.

But asked the same question later in the hearing, Estrada said: "I'm in support of the legalization of jueteng. As a matter of fact, I believe I have co-sponsored a bill to legalize jueteng."

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High court junks Erap TV coverage

By TJ Burgonio

SOLACE of sorts, deposed President Joseph Estrada's request for live media coverage of his trial for plunder in the Sandiganbayan has been thrown out by the Supreme Court.

The court rejected Estrada's plea that he be allowed to modify ruling on TV coverage dated 30 August 2004 filed by former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada," the Supreme Court en banc said in a Nov. 9 resolution.

Renewing his earlier opposition to a live coverage of his trial, Estrada asked the high court on Aug. 30 to allow live press coverage of the proceedings at the sari-sari stores.

His lawyer Jose Flaminiano submitted a motion to the high court asking that his client be given a "chance to present his side of the story to our people."

Since the "high feelings of 2001 have gone down" and since he had been "tried and convicted by publicity," it was time Estrada's side be heard, the motion said.

SC stops hearing of cases vs Kokoy

By TJ Burgonio

THE SUPREME Court has stopped the Sandiganbayan and the Manila Regional Trial Court from proceeding with the string of graft charges lodged against former Leyte Gov. and Ambassador Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez.

The cases were filed by the Office of the Ombudsman against the brother of former First Lady Imelda Marcos for his alleged refusal or failure to file his statements of assets and liabilities (SALN) from 1966 to 1985.

In a Nov. 17 resolution, the Supreme Court's First Division issued a temporary restraining order enjoining the Sandiganbayan and the Manila RTC Branch acting on 23 separate information lodged against Romualdez.

The high court also required the Ombudsman, Sandiganbayan and the Manila RTC to comment on Romualdez's petition.

The Supreme Court, however, ordered Romualdez to pay a P20,000 bond to "answer for the payment of damages" that the respondents might incur "by reason of the issuance of the temporary restraining order."

NEWSBRIEFS

MPA leader killed in South

COMMENTARY — A commander and his aide were shot dead and three other rebels arrested after a clash with government forces in the southern Philippines, the military said yesterday. Soldiers, backed by New People's Army (NPA) rebel-turned militiamen, fought the rebels on Saturday and gunned down rival NPA commander Reynaldo Edejio, Col. Arnulfo Cajipe told reporters. Edejio was killed while three of his companions were detained for questioning, Cajipe added. The 6,000-strong NPA, the political wing of which has been waging a Maoist campaign against the government for 35 years. AFP

Matillano eyes prisons job

MANILA, Philippines — Ret. Maj. Gen. Jolly D'Oro, for Edgar Matillano, is ready to take on the corrections chief post in the Department of Corrections.

"I'm positive I want it this time," Matillano told reporters yesterday. "It gives the chance, I want to serve my country," he said, referring to the vacancy of Director Nestor Aurino, who was appointed by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez after Arsenio Favores, Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago and many quitte September 16th. Matillano is now retired from the military, but he is willing to return to the fold, even as he admitted it was not being offered to him. "I can see my experience in the obstacle to reform the penal system," he said, referring to the four years he spent in prison for his participation in the failed coup attempt against the Aquino administration in 1987 and 1989.

Matillano said he was also open to other positions the President might offer him. Matillano's retirement takes effect on Nov. 30.

"For 11 years, from 1993 to 2004, my military and police career had been in limbo because of my involvement in the failed coup," he said in his valedictory speech at Camp Crame yesterday.

"My family and I paid dearly for my indiscretion — four years of incarceration, including one year in the underground, lost opportunities and a damaged career," he said. Christian E. Esguerra

3 years for PMA head

LIPA CITY, PHILIPPINES (Batangas City) — Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura said he has the support of the Philippine Military Academy as part of the reforms he wants to implement in the judiciary. Nachura, who is also a PMA graduate, said he is supporting a proposal to introduce a certain set course of subjects that will improve its academic standards.

Nachura underscored PMA graduates are not basically "combat soldiers" and that Philippine defense will have programs in the corps of cadets as a solution to military corruption.

Michael Lim Ubac, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

A1
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2004
ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Louie C. Camino
Assistant Lifes Events G. Velarde

Using controversy to generate cheap viewership

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

PERHAPS to mention to negative public opinion about its controversial shows, "Ultimate Beauty" and "Secrets," ABC-5 has been effecting changes in those two programs.

Recently, we missed "Secrets," and, for a change, the feature we caught didn't have sex for its topic.

Instead, a magician was being interviewed.

As for "Ultimate," the last time we caught it, the show had Boy Abunda for a guest co-host...perhaps to keep the scandalous proceedings from straying into the usual claptrap and hair-pulling match.

That was an improvement, but the subjects at hand were still tackled in a tacky way: First, a crossdressing guy was fought over by three men. Then, two gays competed for the favors of one young man.

Since the conflicts were unresolved and the combatants not in all agglutinated, the time came when, as usual, blows were exchanged to be exchanged...but Abunda stepped in to prevent the show's "signature" exchange of blows.

Still, the usual stones and vile taunts were exchanged, so the "improvement" wasn't really all that marked.

The show may have been trying so many out of trouble, while not giving up the risque-before-dawn theme that have made it successful in the first place—a balancing act that is failed to pull off.

It's also important to note that the show's time slot has been moved, from late-night to early-evening, 6 p.m.). This makes the effort of so many confrontations even worse, because more young viewers are watching TV at that hour.

Finally, to anyone of "cleaning up," we'll make the show part monster with parents and educators. If its basic combative element is retained. The program latches onto this because it provides the cheap controversy that makes a certain sort of viewer tune in to watch the programs.

The "least common denominator" kind of viewers is marshaled by the most volatile members of the studio audience, whose comments are as tacky and mean as those dished out by some of the show's guests.

They are here to make cheap, insulting remarks that further lower the level of "discussion" and make many viewers cringe.

What good can be gained from listening to people calling each other "dilimanyo", "gorilla" and "ulimanag"?

What genuine insight into the human condition can be derived from self-possessing and pat explanations like "we're doing this program to show you that these problems do happen in life, perhaps in spheres outside your own?"

Or, "all we're doing is providing you choices...you can either agree or disagree with any of our guests' statements or accusations—and anyway, this is a free country!"

Or, "Life is how we make it!"

Oh, come on. Admit it, the show is using controversy to generate cheap viewership. Unless it stops taking these cheap shots, some viewers will continue to criticize it, because of the publicity it brings to our TV screens.

'Baby X Baby'

ON NOV. 28, Intrigue presents seven hours of heartwarming tales in "Baby X Baby," a special TV event for the whole family.

From 9 a.m. to 12 noon, "Baby Ba-chat" features movie "El-

Using controversy to generate cheap viewership

year-old Amika Jingwaji. She loves dressing up, and has big dreams of becoming a pop idol, but her carefree life comes to unexpected turns when her rich grandmother suddenly enters [sic].

Equally unexpected is the arrival of a baby alien – who comes out in he none other than wonder's strict and nagging grandmother!

Then, from 12 noon to 4 p.m., "UFO Baby" will be screened. In the new episode, when Miya Rosales's parents bond for the 22 to work at Nasa, they arrange for her to stay with their family friend Sammy, a priest living in an old, run-down/huddled temple.

But the priest is off on a year-long trip to India, so he leaves Miya with his pet Ramon, Mitsa and Kamata can't get along with each other, and when quarrels start anything and everything—until a UFO crash lands into the temple!

Spirit of '67

THE REVIVAL of rock 'n'roll showband, Spirit of '67, performs on Nov. 26 at the Kalayaan Hall of Ulah Filipina in Greenhills, San Juan. The pre-Christmas concert has hits from the '60s and '70s, including the music of the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Stylistics and Abba. Call 356-4389.

Manuel Cabrera II

AT 7:00 p.m. on Nov. 23, guitarist Manuel Cabrera II's concert at the CCP Little Theatre were this year's Filipino heroes festive.

Call 832-1014.

Program for the concert features JS Bach's Prelude and Fugue from Lute Suite No. 2 in A minor; BWV 997, J. Arcas' Sarcasm on Themes from "La Traviata", A. Barrios (Mangoré's "La Catedral," Sihl der famous "Kapilan na Giting," F. Sor's Introduction for Lute Solo, M. Pastor's "Theme Slater se Finale," and L. Brouwer's "El Decamerone Negro."

American stars win MTV Europe awards

ROME – American stars crossed the Atlantic to sweep up the big prizes at the MTV Europe Music Awards here last week, with hip hop duo OutKast landing three awards and rhythm and blues crooner Usher taking two.

OutKast took the Best Song award for "Hey Ya" as well as Best Video and Best Group, while Usher took the Best Album prize for "Confessions" and a kiss on the cheeks from Naomi Campbell, when she presented him with the award for Best Male artist.

"I hope you don't get tired of us. We only do what we do," big Boi of OutKast said to that cheering him as they received their award.

Britney Spears, whose Circumst Hist My Perrogative album has had the biggest selling first week for a Circumst Hits by a female artist in British chart history, won the Best Female artist award.

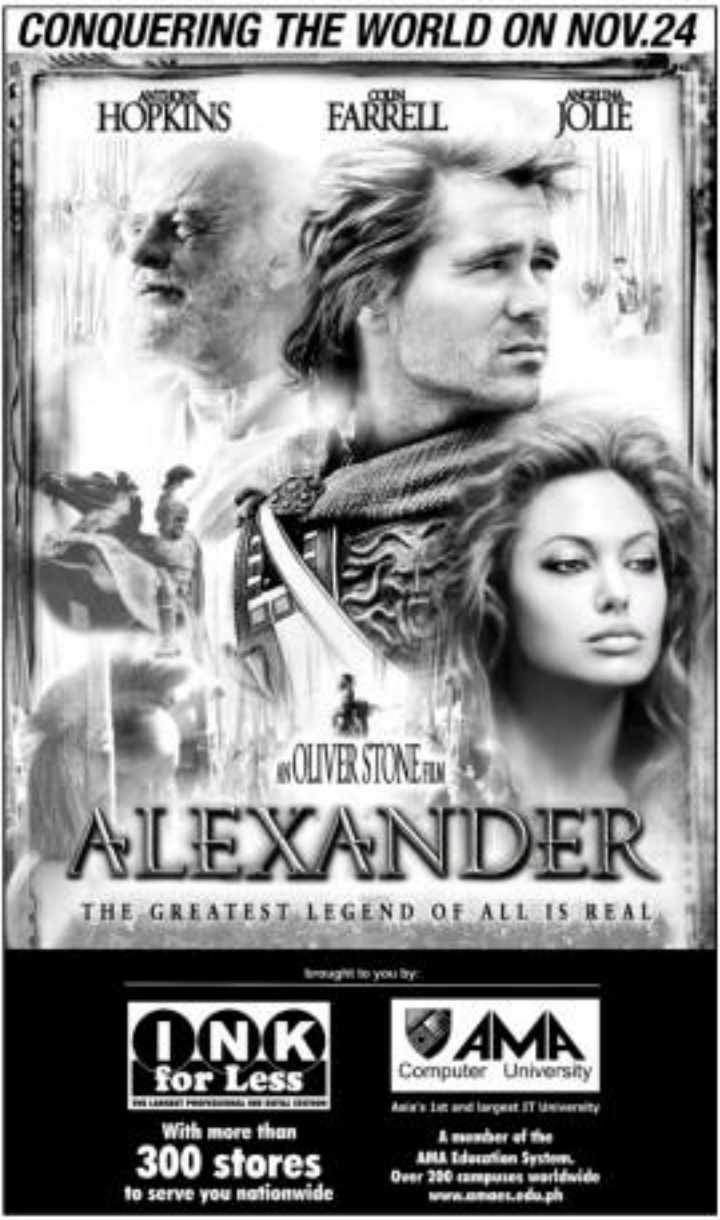
Los Angeles based Maroon 5, responsible for such catchy hits as "This Love" and "She Will Be Loved," took the Best New Act award, and were also nominated for Best Group and Best Song at the awards screening broadcast live on MTV Europe.

Hosted by UK rapper Ghlst and actress Sarah Michelle Gellar at a ruined Hippodrome in the Roman suburb of Tor di Valle, the evening had the expected award-ceremony mix of preening, tuxedo and jewelry political attacks.

In keeping with the Roman theme, Usher was hauled onto the stage atop a chariot and drew applause when he used a mild Italian epithet to describe US President George W. Bush, saying there was a good chance that the program was being seen in several countries he had no plans to invade.

Opening ad libitum capped off a most outspoken attack on Bush with his new hit "Bush," which contains the lyrics "this messiest, this coward, that we have empowered." Other performers at the awards ceremony's 14th Europe Music awards included Scottish band Franz Ferdinand, the Beastie Boys, Green Day fans and Alicia Keys, who took the prize for Best Rhythm and Blues act.

Bandaria provided out her hit "Left Outside Alone?" live on stage outside Rome's Colosseum in front of an estimated 300,000 people, in a concert that was from late afternoon to give the awards greater public appeal. AFP



KILLER STREETS

Southeast Asia's roads to claim 385,000 lives in 5 years–ADB

An ESTIMATED 385,000 people will die and 24 million be injured on Southeast Asian roads over the next five years unless authorities take road safety seriously, an Asian Development Bank (ADB) report said yesterday.

The ADB-sponsored report said the economic cost alone from traffic accidents over the same period could exceed $60 billion, adding that authorities "grossly underestimate" the scale of the problem.

The findings form part of a Joint ADB and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) regional program which aims to establish a coordinated approach to road safety.

The program is due to be discussed today by an Asean transport ministers meeting in Phnom Penh. Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

According to ADB estimates, some 15,000 people were killed and more than 4.7 million more injured on the globe for life in road accidents in Southeast Asian countries last year.

Annual economic losses from road accidents are estimated to be around $13 billion, or 2.2 percent of the respective total gross domestic product.

"Such huge recurring losses are unsustainable and action has to be taken to implement a regional strategy and action plan to improve road safety in the region," according to ADB transport sector specialist Claudia Melliesh.

He said road safety was a growing problem worldwide, resulting in around one million deaths and more than 23 million injuries annually.

Around 85 percent of these deaths occur in developing countries.

The Asia and Pacific region contributes more than eight million such deaths, although it has only around 31 percent of the world's motorized vehicle fleet.

"If each of these injured or killed has, say, five family members or dependents relying upon his or her earnings, there could be 20 million persons in the region being directly affected or suffering economic hardship as a result of road crashes," Melliesh said.

The economic development of the Asean countries, in particular, has spurred rapid growth car use which has resulted in congestion worsening of the road safety situation across the region.

Motorcycles, involved in a high proportion of Asian road accidents, now constitute a large proportion of the vehicle fleet in several countries, ranging from just 3 percent in Brunei to 80 percent in Laos and 94 percent in Vietnam.

Official statistics figures of police reported road deaths and injuries are declining in several countries, such as Indonesia and Philippines.

"But official statistics greatly underestimate the actual numbers of persons killed or injured in road accidents," according to Melliesh.

The ADB-backed research, based on statistics such as hospital admissions, sample surveys and international experience, has found that while police reported road deaths are usually fairly accurate, the number of road-related injuries is often significantly underestimated.

"Total police reported road deaths in Asean in 2003 were 43,205 and 387,392 injured, compared to ADB estimates of 73,193 and 4,743,378, respectively.

The biggest discrepancies occurred in Indonesia and Philippines.

Police reported road deaths and injuries in 2003 in Indonesia were 8,761 and 15,941, respectively, compared to ADB estimates of 30,694 and 2.35 million.

In the Philippines, police reports suggest 995 deaths and 6,790 injuries for that year, compared to ADB estimates of about 9,000 and 493,070, respectively.

The percentage of gross domestic product lost annually through road accidents ranges from 0.5 percent in Singapore to 5.25 percent in Cambodia, averaging out at 2.23 percent for the region.

Indonesia loses the most in money terms, amounting to $6.03 billion a year or 2.91 percent of annual GDP, followed by Thailand at $3 billion or 2.1 percent of GDP. AFP

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GMA popularity falls to lowest level

From page A1

descend swiftness."

Ms Arroyo's approval rating had eroded across all geographic areas and socio-demographic groupings, with the biggest decline (11 percent) recorded among college graduates, Tabunda said in a statement.

High school or vocational school graduates and farmers (10 percent) that did not like her performance.

Most urgent concern

Tabunda said rising inflation—the "most often cited urgent national concern"—was the main culprit in the President's plunging popularity.

The administration got the lowest approval rating (20 percent) and highest disapproval rating (58 percent) for its initiatives to control the rising prices of basic goods.

Tabunda said the results were "not surprising" because inflation had climbed from 6.2 percent in May to 8.4 percent in June and to 7.7 percent in October, or more than double its 2003 level of 3.5 percent.

But Malacañang was quick to seize its hands of rising prices. "While the people are expressing their concerns over the social impact of high oil prices and fiscal reforms, we believe that this is not a verdict on overall presidential leadership," Abalos said.

He cited an internal survey by Abalos, saying, which showed that "most people understand that the nation's basic problems are not President Arroyo's fault and have accumulated from past administrations."

Corruption, low pay

Aside from rising inflation (49 percent), the national concerns of the respondents are fighting corruption (39 percent), peace (34 percent), reducing poverty (31 percent), low pay of workers (30 percent), and abolishing or cutting the purchasing power adjustment (a component of the cost-of-living).

Largely due to the high-profile corruption charges against Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and Winston Garcia, president of the Government Service Insurance System, more Filipinos have shown concern over corruption (22 percent in Bibayan) compared to 19 percent in October), according to Tabunda.

"All these political and economic problems have taken their toll on the performance ratings of the President," she said.

Eating on daily basis

On a personal level, the top five concerns of Filipinos are maintaining their health (54 percent), finishing school (45 percent), having a secure and well-paying job (40 percent), eating on a daily basis (37 percent), and having some savings (31 percent).

The survey found that Filipinos had grown pessimistic about their prospects in 2005.

Tabunda said 47 percent of the respondents expected their personal circumstances to worsen further in the year ahead while 46 percent expressed a similar sentiment on the country's situation in the coming 12 months.

"The gravity of the country's situation as perceived by the people is reflected in the survey's finding that the level of optimism despite 10 percentage points while the proportion of pessimists up by 17 percentage points between June and October 2004," she said.

Six days ago, Arroyo said there were no signs that the Philippines was in the middle of a fiscal crisis, but proposed a series of reform measures to tackle rampant corruption, weak revenue collections and persistent budget deficits.

Her plan, which have come alongside soaring global oil prices and rising inflation, involves new taxes, government spending cuts and job losses for thousands of public sector workers.

The survey also found that the majority of the respondents believed that the President had the best plan to turn around the economy.

Mahar expected the trend to "rise as we move more and more into the economic period from fighting corruption, raising taxes and raising revenues to advance the President's 10-point, pro-poor agenda."

POVERTY or other survey respondents said was a life worse than last year's enrollment in the decline in the popularity rating of President Macapagal-Arroyo. (INQUIRER)

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ENTERTAINME

Elizabeth Taylor

stares death in the face again:

I am not afraid

AGEGONE? wears in real life Elizabeth Taylor, 72, who finds her condition "a bore."

LOS ANGELES—Violet-eyed Hollywood legend Elizabeth Taylor is suffering from congestive heart failure and crippling spinal problems, but she insists from says she is not afraid of death.

The star, 72, once hailed as the world's most beautiful woman, said so in the last issue of Hollywood's golden age, revealed in a rare interview that she was once again staring death in the face.

Taylor, who spent 40 weeks in hospital in the age of 12 in 1945's "National Velvet," has gone out in public only twice in the past year, has difficulty breathing and walking and has a nurse by her side, she told OK! Magazine.

Slow decline

The magazine said she was recently diagnosed with congestive heart failure, a condition in which the heart cannot pump enough blood to the body's other organs, resulting in fatigue, breathlessness and a slow decline.

The condition is "a bore," Taylor, dripping in her famous collection diamonds and sporting her humorous wit, said during an interview at her mansion in Los Angeles' plush Bel Air district.

But when asked if she feared death, the actress, who nearly died of pneumonia while filming the epic "Cleopatra" in 1961 and then again several years ago, was unequivocal.

"No," she said more than once and firmly. "Really I'm not, because I've been there."

'A real mess'

Congestive heart failure, which affects around five million Americans, kills slowly in a shortage of blood causes organs to begin shutting down, medicine experts said.

Taylor also suffers from scoliosis, a congenital disease that has twisted her spine so badly that she is in constant pain. Last month she underwent spinal surgery to repair seven compression fractures in her spine.

"My body's a real mess. If you look at it in the mirror, it's just completely convex and concave," Taylor said.

"I've become one of those poor little old women who's bent sideways. My 2-inch-es are historical. The bone doctors just throw up their hands and say 'Sorry, there's nothing we can do!' Which is so cheery," she said.

Despite her pain and failing health, Taylor, who has been up and down between her campaign for the charity she founded to help those with AIDS, says she still has her legendary sunny, what's helped survive against all odds.

"Despite worst think, 'Oh God, she's still alive!'" she said. "But there's some resilience in me that makes me keep fighting. It's the damnedest thing—I just keep coming back."

Taylor recounted how she felt her spirit leaving her body when she was near death in London 40 years ago, and saw her third husband, the producer Mike Todd, who was killed in a 1958 plane crash.

"It's hard to talk about, I was in a tunnel. I saw Mike. We said, 'It's not your time.' I did fight. And I did come back, and I remember it all. It was quite a trip," Taylor told *Ok!* magazine.

Taylor has run the gamut of life, threatening illnesses, including a bone tumor, fatal substance-resulting from a fall during the filming of "Butterfield Eight," and alcohol and drug addictions.

'Sleep alone!'

The star, who was born in Britain and made her first movie 62 years ago, is probably best known for her exotic love life, which kept her on the world's front pages for decades.

Following Todd's death, she had an affair with and later married his best friend, the singer Eddie Fisher, who was married to Taylor's pal Debbie Reynolds at the time.

"What do you expect me to do? Sleep alone?" she asked an interviewer who pointed out the widespread anger she elicited, which resulted in Taylor being publicly branded a home-wrecker.

But that marriage was fell apart in an unprecedented glare of publicity in 1962 when she began a torrid affair with her "Cleopatra" co-star Richard Burton in 1962.

The scandal sent Taylor counterscandal by the Pope, but her relationship with Burton lasted for 11 years during which the couple were married and divorced twice.

Burton and Todd were the two great loves of her life, Taylor told *Ok!* Magazine.

But after eight marriages and countless romances, all that is over for the diva, who was wearing the 33-carat Krupp diamond ring given to her by Burton in 1968 during the interview.

"I've learned to be alone," she told the magazine. "Actual being without a man doesn't mean you're alone. I have good friends, and children and grandchildren. And memories—wonderful memories." AFP

Will gay 'Alexander' lure box-office crowds?

'Queer Eye for the Macedonian Guy'

ALEXANDER THE GREAT according to Stone—Colin Farrell (right) with Rhys Ifans as Ptolemy and Jared Leto who wears eyeliners as Hephaestion.

LOS ANGELES—Oliver Stone's new film about Alexander the Great depicts the king as bisexual, fueling outrage from viewers and prompting Hollywood to ask if a world conqueror with dyed blond hair and waxed legs will be able to attract box-office favorites.

One newspaper calls it a case of "Queer Eye for the Macedonian Guy". Others have speculated that Stone, always a controversial filmmaker, is taking a big risk with a $140 million epic by including scenes of homosexuality between Alexander and his best friend Hephaestion.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) says the film hardly seen ground for a big budget epic because it shows Hephaestion "as the true love of Alexander's life."

A line from the film sees Alexander was defeated only once—for Hephaestion's thighs.

'Troy' avoided it

Last summer's blockbuster film, "Troy," which could have portrayed Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, brushed aside any homosexual undertones to concentrate on Achilles' desire for a Trojan princess.

Everyone associated with "Alexander," from Stone to star Colin Farrell, dated the film, which premiered on Wednesday in historically accurate and reflects the pagan mores of around 330 BC when the Macedonian king explored the world's neighbors' empire Persia, and pursued one to the ends of the Earth.

Farrell, in a recent interview with Reuters, said he had no problem with the role because Stone made the film as historically accurate as possible and any lesbian sexuality was something of the times and part of the characters."

Stone said he kept the movie accurate and had no interview on the set. He added there was no question that Alexander had "a polymorphous sexuality and an eighties' in the deepest sense of the word."

History twisted

But one scholar Robin Lane Fox, author of a biography of Alexander and historical adviser to the film, said homosexuality and bisexuality were not "issues in ancient times" and that Alexander had extensive relations with women.

But a group of angry Greek viewers say Stone and the film's distributor Warner Bros., a unit of Time Warner Inc., should be sued for making history. The lawyers said they have asked Stone and Warner Bros. to include a subtitle in the film to clarify Alexander the Great is bisexual. Spokesmen for Warner Bros. said Stone did not have any immediate comment.

"My guess is not saying that we are against gays, but we are saying that the production company should make it clear to the audience that this film is pure fiction and not a true depiction of the life of Alexander," Dimitri Vandilos, who is spearheading the legal campaign, told Reuters by telephone.

Two years ago, hundreds of Greeks from Alexander's home area Macedonia, stormed an archeological symposium after one speaker presented a paper on the homosexuality of Alexander.

Stone's film, which he had been trying to get on the screen for 15 years, was filmed mainly in Morocco and Thailand. The Athens News Agency said an ocean scenes shot in Greece because of government opposition to Stone's portrayal of the Greek hero.

Asked if he tried to tone scenes, Stone insisted he shot the film the way he wanted. The only overtly-related scene in the movie is a wedding night love scene between Alexander and his wife Roxanne that starts with her pouring a kettle to his chest after the couple has swapping a ring from Hephaestion, who is played by Jared Leto wearing eyeliner. Reuters

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

US wants to exploit new Mideast chances–Powell

JERUSALEM—Israeli leaders assured visiting US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Monday that they would do everything they can to allow Palestinian presidential elections to take place, including easing travel restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Powell told Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom that the United States wants to take advantage of new opportunities in the Middle East created by the death of Yasser Arafat, and that it supports Palestinian elections set for Jan. 9.

Powell met to hold talks with Palestinian leaders later Monday in the West Bank town of Jericho and make a more optimistic offer there.

The Palestinians say they want the United States to pressure Israel to withdraw troops from West Bank population centers ahead of the elections in which an interim successor as Palestinian Authority president will be chosen. Arafat died Nov. 11.

Shalom said after his meeting with Powell that it is also in Israel's interest that the Palestinian elections go forward.

"The first priority in this Palestinian election which will hopefully bring about a Palestinian leadership with whom we can sit down and address all the issues on our agenda," he said.

"I have reassured the secretary today that Israel will do everything in its power to ensure their smooth running," he said.

Shalom did not say whether Israel would pull back troops, but said that Israel would remove obstacles and that the Palestinians would have "freedom of movement" in the run-up to the elections.

POWELL

Israel occupied West Bank towns during a 2002 military offensive aimed at halting Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel. Troops have since withdrawn from some areas, but continue to enforce travel restrictions on Palestinians. Palestinians say they need freedom of movement for the vote.

Powell and Monday that the Gaza Strip will do what it can to ensure peaceful elections. Without interfering in Arafat by name, Powell said: "There is no excuse of opposition by Mr. Arafat himself to the Palestinian elections that will be held on Jan. 9."

Powell reiterated that the Palestinians must vote in settlement. "El-ections must be credible," he said.

The Israelis, Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, is trying to persuade militant groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, to halt violence during the election campaign, but it is not clear whether they will agree to a truce.

Powell, meanwhile, said Israel and the Palestinians must renew their commitments in the US-backed "road map" peace plan, which was launched in June 2003, but never got off the ground. AP

Cholesterol-lowering drug dangerous, doctors say

MENASHEE, Wisconsin—New reports across another drug company of being too close to call a dangerous combination from the US Food and Drug Administration to protect the public from such risks.

That time it's Merpol, a cholesterol-lowering statin that Dewey Mc. withdrew in 2001 after many who took it developed a severe and sometimes fatal muscle disorder. It now study found that the risks were far greater than had been believed.

The study concludes that today's up-selling statins are very safe, but could be risky when used with other drugs called fibrates by older people with diabetes.

It also reveals that fibrates alone can be dangerous. These drugs lower triglycerides and often are taken by diabetics.

An papers on the issue were to be released Monday and will be published Dec. 1 in the Journal of the American Medical Association. In editors called for a new, independent effort separate from the FDA to monitor drugs after they're on the market.

"It is not reasonable to expect that the same agency that was responsible for approval of drug licensing and labeling would also be committed to actively seek evidence to prove it will wrong," there wrote.

Merck & Co. and the FDA have been accused of moving too slowly to stop sales of the arthritis drug Vioxx, which Merck withdrew in September after revealing it raised the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Some scientists claim that pain killers similar to Vioxx, especially Pfizer Inc.'s Bextra, also carry risks.

Dr. Thorolfson, Dr. David Graham, associate director of science at the FDA's Office of Drug Safety told a Senate panel that dangerous drugs are being sold now. Bextra and Arthrotec PLC's statin, Crestor, were among the five he named. AP

Iraq sets first multiparty election in decades on January 30

BAGHDAD—Iraq announced that its first post-Saddam Hussein election will be held on Jan. 30, as world powers prepared for a meeting in the country's future against a backdrop of escalating violence.

Electoral commission chair Abdel Hussein al-Hindawi, who said the commission unanimously decided on the date, called for both Iraqi and international observers to monitor the election and said he hoped the United Nations would play an "important role."

It will be the first free and multiparty election in decades, with 120 parties and individuals out of 198 applicants already approved to run in the polls to choose a national assembly, a regional parliament for the Kurdish north, and 18 provincial councils.

The elections will mark the next big step in the postwar political process after power was transferred from the US-led occupation to an interim government in June.

Ahead of the elections, US and Iraqi troops continued to hunt down insurgents across the country following a massive operation in the Sunni Muslim stronghold of Falluja, where 1,600 suspects were rounded up.

There had been growing skepticism that the elections would actually be held on time, coupled with threats of a boycott by radical Sunni Muslims.

The US military has already said that troops of duty would be extended and reinforcements sent to Iraq for the elections.

The announcement of a date for the elections was a boost ahead of a conference in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh opening on Monday which brings regional and international powerbrokers to the same table for the first time since the Arab power transfer.

Representatives of 60 countries, the United Nations, European Union, Arab League, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Iraq's neighbors are expected to pledge support to UN resolution 1546 on the political process.

Iran nevertheless warned that the first day of the conference, which will focus on regional issues, could be the most contentious.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Hamid Reza Asefi said his country would "protest against the methods of the United States, insist on the necessity of withdrawing American troops from Iraq and the organization of elections on schedule."

Another boost for the unelected Iraqi government came when the so-called Paris Club of creditor nations agreed to cut Iraq's debt—which totals a whopping $40 billion—by 80 percent, officials said.

US President George W. Bush, in a forum of Pacific rim nations in Santiago, applauded the move. "I encourage non-Paris Club nations to agree to comparable debt reduction for Iraq," said Bush, who has made writing away the one-ton country's $120 billion debt a key priority.

A US-Iraqi military push against insurgent bastions has left several major cities in tatters, and each and successive reconstruction is seen as crucial to win over Iraqi opinion and avoid providing a fertile breeding ground for further rebellion. AFP

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Row brews over Arafat medical file

PARIS—The widow of Yasser Arafat has questioned the right of his nephew to receive a copy of the medical file of the late Palestinian leader. Suha Arafat's lawyers said in a statement Tuesday until controversy over the cause of his death.

Without naming Arafat's nephew Nasser al-Qidwa, who arrived in Paris earlier Tuesday from Cairo to pick up his uncle's medical records, lawyers Philippe Pharisien and Jean-Marie Burguburu said Qidwa was not one other eligible people to receive the files than Arafat's wife.

Spokesperson for the French defense ministry Jean-Francois Hamon had said early Tuesday that Qidwa had the right to access to the information if he requested it.

Should the records be handed over to a third party without Suha Arafat's consent, hospital authorities would have to bear the consequences, Suha's lawyers warned.

Arafat, 75, was admitted to the Percy hospital on Oct. 29, but the cause of his death has never been revealed—prompting a flurry of rumors including that he was poisoned by Israeli agents.

Late Friday lawyers for Arafat's widow said that she had been given her husband's medical file and then left for her second home in Tunisia.

Suha, invoking French medical confidentiality laws, has kept a tight grip on information relating to her husband's treatment during his last days.

Qidwa, who is the Palestinian envoy to the United Nations, has been officially designated next of kin by French officials alongside Suha and her 9-year-old daughter.

Arafat's doctors and French media reports have said he ailment involved a blood disorder. AFP

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METRO

2 boys drown in La Mesa Dam

By Tina C. Santos

TWO boys drowned in an oxbow reservoir inside the La Mesa Dam Watershed compound in Quezon City on Sunday, police said yesterday.

Initial reports reaching the Criminal Police Office-Criminal Investigation Unit (CPIO-CIU) identified the victims as Manuel Jhego Torres, 11, and Raymund Ayebo, 10, both residents of Barangay Greater Lagro.

According to police, the two boys were swimming in La Mesa Dam over the weekend.

Police added that the boys were reported missing some 9 a.m. Sunday.

The water level at the La Mesa Dam was high at the time, police added.

Civilian volunteers who immediately conducted a search and rescue operation for the two boys managed to recover Ayebo's body around 6 p.m. of the same day.

Members of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) recovered Ayebo's body at 9:40 p.m., also on Sunday.

Police said the victims were in the area to swim with their playmates.

The victims' friends told police that the two boys reached the compound's high fence to get to the dam.

While police surmised that the boys might have slipped while playing and eventually drowned, investigators are still considering further investigation on the incident.

Teresita Abayag, mother of one of the victims, said her son could have been saved had his son's playmates told them about the incident right away.

The victim's playmates claimed they were initially hesitant about telling the parents of the two boys about what happened for fear that they would get a scolding.

Security guards manning the facility said the victims were trespassers.

Several signs had already been planted around the facility warning visitors not to swim in the area as a preventive measure against such incidents from taking place, the guards said.

DepED steps into school canteen row

By Tarra Y. Quismundo

WHILE the (aborted) privatization of a canteen in a Manila public high school is still up for resolution, the education department has formally stepped into the investigation to settle the entire mess and fast.

Teachers of Lakandula High School, a public school in Jose Leon Street, Tondo, Manila, recently met with officials of the Department of Education last week to explain their opposition to the privatization of their school canteen.

"They asked us what happened and what we want to happen. At least we could see that they are doing something about it," said teacher Grace dela Cruz.

DepEd officials are set to visit Lakandula High School on Friday, where another round of talks would be held with the teachers, dela Cruz said.

Lakandula teachers continue to protest the privatization of their school canteen through a contract that former school principal Alice Bita signed with private managers. The teachers insist that the canteen should be operated by their cooperative.

This was the first time the DepEd employed the "moral persuasion" method in thrashing out intra-school conflicts in Manila, said Manila Division of City Schools assistant superintendent Isabelita Sanvoa.

Bita, meanwhile, has yet to be contacted to get her side on the DepEd's moral persuasion method.

"I do not know what they would ask me, but I am open to it. But I would like to discuss the movement of principals," said Bita, who chose to pursue her appeal for reinstatement even while the school division had already named her (town after she was reassigned).

Acting on a complaint the teachers filed, the school division found that Bita' contract with private manager Michelle Pineda was legal. The division, however, recommended that the case be forwarded to the national education office for further investigation.

The canteen thus stayed in the hands of a private manager, while Bita was reassigned to another school upon the school division's decision. Bita has appealed her reassignment, asking that she be retained in Lakandula, where she was principal for five years.

The teachers had said they would not allow Bita' return, and would press for the return of canteen operations to their control.

Help just a text message away

By Edson C. Tatad Jr.

1600, help in Caloocan City will just be a text message away.

The Caloocan City government is preparing to implement a new response system where residents can send text messages in such help-during emergency cases.

A text hotline will soon be made available, allowing residents to text a central center at the city hall, similar to the existing emergency hotline Patrol 117.

City Mayor Enrico Echiverri said his Mobile Alert Center System is a cheaper way to seek help since every text message sent will only cost P1. Text messages sent to Patrol 117 cost P5 each.

The system is still awaiting the approval of the city council.

Transport groups set to strike Thursday

By Carlos S. Butiong

IT'S PEAK...

Public utility vehicles (PUVs) in Metro Manila and nearby provinces are set to hold a strike on Thursday. (See related story on A16.)

Transport leaders said the participation of jeeps, buses, taxis, FXs and even tricycles, would paralyze public transport on Thursday.

PUV operators are protesting the government's decision to providing fuel discounts and rebating what they call the "unfair" collection practices of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

There is no plan, at least for the meantime, to ask for an addition of fare increases, according to transport leaders.

Zenaida Maranan, president of the Federation of Drivers and Jeepney Operators of the Philippines said not even Malacañang would persuade transport leaders to call off the strike.

Originally scheduled in October, transport leaders postponed holding a strike after the government organized a dialogue between them and the MMDA.

But nothing came out of the talks, according to the transport groups.

"Everybody is joining the strike, even the truckers, aboitiz buses and school buses said they will join the transport holiday. Nothing can stop us. This is a decision of the majority," said Maranan.

Aside from Pepalay, other major transport groups said they had made a commitment to join the strike in Metro Manila and nearby Luzon provinces like Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, and even the Bicol region.

These groups are the Pinagkaisahan Jeepney Transport Operators Nationwide or Piston, the Philippine Confederation of Genuine Organization Alliance of Concerned Transportation Organizations or Pinoy Acts, the umbrella organization of all bus groups, and others.

Maranan said some provincial groups like those in Mindanao could not join the scheduled strike on Nov. 25, but promised to participate if there would be another transport holiday.

More than a million PUVs would not ply their routes on Thursday according to organizers.

In a statement, transport groups also protested the dismissal of both national and local governments that they said led to higher fees and charges, increased fines and penalties, and delays in the processing of documents.

No need to push panic button over 'meningo'—DOH

By Blanche S. Rivera

DON'T PANIC.

This was the Department of Health's advice yesterday to the public over the reported increase in the number of cases of meningococcemia, a fatal respiratory disease affecting the blood.

DOH spokesperson for infectious diseases Laningding Villa said that even in Baguio City, where local transmission of the disease had been observed, nothing of epidemic proportions seems forthcoming.

With a fatality rate of 40 percent to 50 percent, nine out of ten meningococcemia patients die after they contract the disease. Nine of the 11 suspected meningococcemia cases in Baguio City have already died. An 11-year-old girl, Adalyn Bernas of Antipolo City, who exhibited symptoms of the disease, also died last weekend, but city health officials said her death was just an isolated case, and that there was no outbreak of meningococcemia in their area.

Villa said there was no reason to panic because all persons had been identified and isolated, and the six patients brought to San Lazaro Hospital in Manila last week were all sporadic cases.

"You don't have to drink antibiotics unless you have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed to have meningococcemia," Villa said in a press briefing at the DOH central office in Manila.

She said there was also no need to issue masks as some Baguio residents do, because the disease is transmitted through droplets and is not airborne.

Teodoro SARS, which is caused by a virus, meningococcemia is caused by a bacteria, as it does not flean in the air," Villa, a medical specialist with the National Center for Disease Prevention, said.

She, however, advised hospital workers according to meningococcemia patients to observe the mandated precautions and wear surgical masks.

The DOH had issued a caution increase in the number of meningococcemia cases in Baguio City since 1998. There were no reported meningococcemia case in the city for the past five years compared with the 18 reported only since October.

Meningococcemia, a disease caused by the bacteria neisseria meningitidis, thrives in the upper respiratory system.

It has an incubation period of seven days.

Villa said some diseases symptoms are able to fight out the bacteria, resulting to healthy carriers.

However, those who develop symptoms such as fever, rashes, vomiting and nerve palsies require admission to the intensive care unit.

A health team had also gone to Bicutan' house in Sitio Maligaya, Barangay San Pedro, to give antibiotics and instructions to them to family members to prevent the spread of the disease. With Reuel J. Aurares, AFP

SAN LAZARO nurses wear their surgical masks while the hospital premises as a precautionary measure. EDD CASTRO

P8-M kitty for capture of Metro's most wanted

By Nancy C. Carvajal

MORE than P8 million had been allocated as monetary reward for the capture of Metro Manila's most wanted persons.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon said Cesar Amado, alias Nang, topped the list facing charges related to P9 and kidnap with a P1 million reward for his capture.

The others are: Edgar Alvarez P95, P500,000; Jimmie Alano alias Tony Albar Sarmiento and Calvin Bruno Lagula alias Bitoy, P600,000.

Lonnie Manzanilla alias Larry, and Steven Embernate, P300,000; Vicente Ismale, P400,000; Jose Jun Pedro, P375,000; Margarito Osorio, Rolando Lanzanas alias William Boyd and Benjamin Tatadao, P250,000; Angelo Hong, P225,000; Alexander Alderete, Bernie Recbo, Arthur Cajigal, Roberto Padilla, Heli Bhagwani, P175,000; Alex Manuel, Ramjie Candelaria, Hernan Belmonte, Rodel Flores, Melvin Magbanua, Bobby Feliz, Armando Villanueva, P140,000; Florentino Mora, P90,000; Roberto Cleto, Tito Lagunzad, Rolando Ramos, Ragim, P68,000 and Noli Jadaloa, P50,000. Maria Paulita was also in the list, but had no one responding reward.

METROBRIEFS

Binay barred

A MAKATI Regional Trial Court judge yesterday barred Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay from representing the city government in its case against the Department of Transportation and Communications over the relocation of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3.

Judge Elmo Alameda granted a temporary restraining order (TRO) sought by Binay from representing Makati City in the case filed by Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

Alameda ordered Binay to appear in the subject matter in the specific case filed by Mendoza.

Binay's lawyer Renato Bondoc said the mayor will file a motion for reconsideration on the decision.

Bondoc said the mayor is also prohibited from participating in any occupation other than the exercise of their functions as city chief executives.

Bondoc said the mayor is also prohibited from participating in any occupation other than the exercise of their functions as city chief executives.

Waiting period

BLAIR Pressilda, country representative of the National Indicators Foundation, announced in Davao Oriental's Makati is on a three-day visit to Manila starting today to meet and coordinate with the new international program of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. The program is designed to contribute to the parliamentary and political development in Southeast Asia. On Thursday, Pressilda will meet with the executive director of the Center for Constitutional and Administrative Law, law of the Ateneo de Manila University, Dr. Jose Cruz.

Relief on the way for Rodriguez town

By Lutgar B. dela Fuente and Margaux C. Ortiz

INTERIOR SECRETARY Angelo Reyes has decided to mediate in the dispute between the Metro Manila Development Authority and Rodriguez, Rizal over the non-payment of the MMDA's obligations to the town and the impending closure of the Rodriguez dump, all trash going to the latter declared.

Reyes met Rodriguez, Rizal Mayor Pedro Cuenco yesterday to discuss the problem, but failed to reach an agreement that would delay the impending closure of the dump scheduled on Dec. 1.

Cuenco said he is willing to meet with the Authority halfway. "Three months in payment would be enough for us now," he said. "But anything less than that would not do."

But the MMDA yesterday assured the public that the agency would not be buried from using the Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility (MOWEDF) on Dec. 1 because of "unpaid debts."

MMDA General Manager Robert Nazareno said the MMDA had already issued a P1 million check as initial payment to the municipality of Rodriguez.

He added that they had also asked the Department of Budget and Management for the release of their cash allowance amounting to more than P300 million that would be released "this week or next week."

"In a month ago, the MMDA stopped paying the town some P40 million for the use of the six-hectare Montalban Solid Waste Disposal Facility. The Authority also owns the landfill's access road," Nazareno said. "Because of this, P1.91 million in accumulated dues covering the same period.

During his conversation with MMDA General Manager Nazareno, Cuenco disclosed that the MMDA offered to pay interest for two months. Earlier, MMDA chair Bayani Fernando, who is to indemnify as official business, repeatedly said a repayment must be had already signed a check as partial payment to the town.

But Cuenco said the MMDA must also pay the contractor of the dump, otherwise, no one will touch the disposal area.

"If the MMDA does not abide, no one would manhandle the landfill. Garbage would just be dumped there, and I will not allow that to happen," he said, adding the consensus has reformed line of to be tentative is agreeable until 10 Dec. 30.

If the town makes good on its word, Metro Manila could face another garbage crisis just as the Christmas season is approaching. The cities of Caloocan City, Manila City, Malabon City, Navotas City, Marikina City, Pasig City, Parañaque City, and the towns of San Juan and Taguig would suffer from the dump site's closure.

Cuenco said the closure of the MMDF will go on as scheduled. "I hope we would not come to a situation where only the residents of Metro Manila would experience a good Christmas," he said.

"The town (Rodriguez) smoke because of our garbage, and now the MMDA wants the town like garbage," said Municipality Mayor Virgilio "Boyet" Gonzales II.

Acknowledging that he had received Cuenco's appeal for leniency, Nazareno said the MMDA should immediately pay what is due the town.

Homosexuality in the military

ON TARGET
RANDY DAVID

If WHO the first time it was confirmed homosexuality exists in our macho military organization.

In June either... a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) at a time... was caught red-handed engaging in homosexual liaisons with his enlisted men. Enlisted personnel say soldiers whose tastes range from johnson to exotic orgasms.

Army Maj. Rodie Bautista (PMA Class 1988) was caught red-video during sexual acts and sex with some enlisted men at the Light Armored Brigade (LAB). The video was shown on DWA-TV Intelligence TV program.

Before that making-pare video, talk about homosexuality in the military came in whispers or told in unfounded rumors.

The Armed Forces high command got an end in the line it immediately ordered Bautista investigated by possible court-martial. He defended could probably fall under Article 97 Par 96 of the articles of war under "undermining [con-officer and gentleman.

Having homosexual relations, especially if done openly, is taboo in the macho military.

How did Bautista get into the PMA and graduate from it which under undergo a thorough screening process and still be publicly wanted as an outcast gay in the time he was admitted, said a military officer who requested anonymity. Perdie Ramos, the military officer said, had been homosexuality that became full-blown after he came out of the parents academy.

But I disagree with the statement of that military officer that gays could get into the premier military institution. A couple of years ago, an upperclass cadet was dismissed for ordering a plebe to masturbate him.

The former cadet who grilled the brass refused to name those upperclassmen who ran near military officers. All dismissed cadets would not tell you their inner experiences inside the academy. That's how thoroughly indoctrinated they were while still at the PMA.

***

Seeing my father's time (he retired from the defunct Philippine Constabulary in 1978), there was talk that some officers were gay and some "in-closing" some subordinates enlisted men.

I remember eavesdropping on a conversation between my Old Man and my fellow wives I was in the elementary grades. My Dad, who was then commander of a PC company in a Mindanao town, said that some soldiers had complained that his junior officer had been making passes at some soldiers.

The image of the junior officer was still very close to my mind even after all these years: big, brawny and muscularized. His children were my playmates. In my young mind, I couldn't believe that an officer who killed many bloody outlaws could be a queer (Obvious used for gay).

Not many years later, I would learn that one can be gay and be a killer at the same time. I knew a military official who was a ruthless killer when he was still in the service. It turned out he's gay.

Perdie Jaime Ramos let's say he's nuts. Both the flipping effect of many prostitutes in London in the 1800s was said to be a homosexual. The flower Strangler, who killed many women, was also reported to be gay.

***

I still say that to Makati City Mayor Jejo Binay once story told to me by a City Hall insider.

The Ayalas allegedly owned the city government P50-million kickback once. They reportedly offered Binay P100 million to "goodwill money" so they wouldn't have to pay the whole amount. The reason the P50 million wouldn't go to the city coffers.

Binay rejected the offer, my source said. The Ayalas were reportedly forced to pay P50-M in back taxes.

Quest for relocation site not quite over

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

RESIDENTS of Malabon City about to be displaced by the long-delayed Manhasat Project are proposing yet another relocation site for their homes in Bulacan.

After they were rejected by Bulacan's City Mayor Marcelino Gatchalian, members of the Federation of Railways Informal Settlers in Malabon are trying their luck with the Municipality of Bulacan.

Group leader Cleofa Enerio told the Bulacan they had begun talks with the owner of agricultural land in Barangay Sitio Hernando as a possible site.

But group had earlier proposed Barangay Potrero in Malabon City as a relocation site, but Gatchalian had said he would not accept Malabon City residents.

The moratorium on the demolition of the affected houses in Malabon City a House of Representatives committee is to demolished requires today, National Housing Authority sector manager Maria Theresa Dilliptan said.

The NHA had already sentenced dismiss the opinion for the more than 5,000 affected Malabon City residents in the Dela Paz Pedestrian program, or relocation to the already developed Tanauville city in San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan.

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OPINION

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Climate of impunity

THE KILLING of journalists is continuing unabated and the death toll has reached an alarming level. In just four days, from Nov. 12 to 15, two journalists were killed. The recent deaths raise the toll to 59 in the last 18 years since democracy was restored in 1986, or an average of three a year. Compare this with the 32 journalists slain in 14 years of Ferdinand Marcos' martial law rule, and tell us if that's not alarming.

EDITORIAL

The latest victims were Dyan Boyd Lumawag, a photographer of Mindanao Tribune, who was shot dead in Jolo, Sulu, on Nov. 12; and Hermies Hinolan, station manager of Radyo Bomba in Kalibo, who was killed on Nov. 15.

The killings continue unabated because the climate of impunity has not been shattered. A journalist is killed, but after the initial hue and cry, the usual press statements and calls for investigations, his case is soon forgotten. He becomes just another statistic in the worsening record of criminality in the country.

The climate of impunity encourages masterminds and assassins to continue picking off journalists almost at leisure. The killers think: We're not going to be punished for it, so we're going to silence and kill those media workers whose exploits have put us in a bad light.

Of the pre-martial law killings of journalists, only two have been solved: the murder in 1986 of Bonnie Garcia Sr., publisher of the Sunday Punch of Dagupan City, and the slaying in 1967 of Anacleto Abad Formile of Cebu City.

In only one of the cases since 1986 has a suspect been arrested. The victim was Edgar Damalerio of the Scribe and Mindanao Gold Star of Dagadlar City, who was shot on May 15, 2003. The suspected gunman, PO3 Guillermo Wagdie, was arrested some time ago, but he soon escaped from police custody. He surrendered last Sept. 14 after the media protested against the apparent laxity of the police. But even while in detention, he is reported to be using his followers to harass the witnesses and the family of the victim.

The deaths toll of journalists was biggest in Mindanao, with 28. Second was Luzon with 16; third was the Visayas with 9; and last was Metro Manila with 6. What the figures show is that consistently journalists are more vulnerable to assassins. This is so because the government officials, politicians and other public figures whom they criticize or whose wrongdoings they expose take their stories and commentaries personally. Critic and enemy are tightly knit constructions where everybody knows everybody else and one loses face when one's wrongdoings are exposed to the media.

Government officials, politicians and public figures in Metro Manila have recourse to the courts and file libel or damage suits if they feel they have been aggrieved or hurt by the media. But similar public figures in the provinces are more impatient and hot-headed; they feel they must avenge themselves immediately and thus either personally kill the hated journalist or take out "a contract" on him.

What must be done to stop the killings of journalists?

First, put an end to the climate of impunity that encourages the killing of journalists by going after the masterminds and killers, arresting them, prosecuting them, convicting them and making sure that they serve out their sentences.

Second, improve the performance of the police in solving crimes. The police have to do better intelligence work if they are to catch the masterminds and killers in the slaying of journalists. Also, in certain cases, collusion between the police and government officials, politicians or public figures involved in the slaying of journalists must be stopped.

Third, improve the system of dispensation of justice and hasten the adjudication of cases. The saying that "justice delayed is justice denied" is especially true in the cases of the more than 90 journalists who have been killed since pre-martial law days.

Fourth, set deadlines for the solution of the cases of slain journalists and make the police and prosecutors accountable for the arrest, prosecution and conviction of the killers.

Fifth, get the people, and particularly media men themselves, sufficiently aroused so that they would put enormous pressure on the authorities to solve the cases of slain journalists.

The people should realize that the killing of journalists is a real threat to freedom of the press, and ultimately, to their freedom. Until such time when journalists can be assured of protection from vindictive news subjects and of justice when something violent or fatal has been done to them, we cannot call the press truly free. And unless the press is truly free, we cannot have true democracy.

A macabre treadmill

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

ASK we losing count as the bodies of journalists "eliminated with extreme prejudice," to use how violently one has jumped, piles up?

Mindoro photo editor Gene Boyd was taking pictures of police cannot when he was shot. He was the 58th newsman killed in Marcos tallies started in 1986. In Aklan, Bombo Radyo's Roy Mabitas was also gunned down. He was victim No. 59.

Yet, it seemed only yesterday when we toiled numbers of 26 Filipino journalists cut-gored a World Association of Newspapers protest. That was in 1999, the bloodiest.

The death toll topped 32 when the International Press Institute reported in 2000: "The Philippines has the highest number of journalists murdered on account of their profession."

"Was Mohamad 'Nasir' Ali Ampatuan involved in the 30th victim?" we wondered aloud two years later. "Or does that curse belong to Mindoro Guardian reporter Joy Mariel? Where does that place Ferdinand Bayes, editor of Ogoday's Press Freedom Weekly? Is this number invaluable, it's easy to lose track."

Assassination is the electronic censorship. But social talents are blackpointing as internet users move square. So much the latest victim's name, plus incidental details into a secretary's memory, found is clogged out by the dark. Done...until the next killing.

"Today the body count is 36," noted the 2003 Cebu Press Freedom Week packet information. "Can one really say we enjoy freedom of the press when it must be practiced under the shadow of a gun?" is quoted publisher Teodoro Locsin Jr., asking. "A culture of impunity guarantees there will be more attacks in the year ahead," the editorial glumly warned.

That unfortunately has come to pass with Boyd and Hinolan. One death is a tragedy. After that, it's just statistics.

It's cold comfort that we have no franchise on the slaughter. The Committee for the Protection of Journalists notes that 266 journalists would-be-writers killed over the past decade.

Armed conflict is one reason: 66 journalists or 16 percent were caught in crossfires. In Afghanistan, nine were killed in a year. Scores or 38 percent died, not in combat, but in "conflict situations," or while covering violent demonstrations. The deaths of 96 percent would be traced to corrupt politicians, drug and criminal groups.

"Whenever one journalist is exposed in violence, intimidation or arbitrary detention, because of commitment to truth, all citizens are deprived of the right to express themselves and act according to their conscience," CPJ states. The Orwellian press freedom watchdog.

"In Colombia and the Philippines, journalists are silenced simply to stop them from publishing or broadcasting the corruption," observed Christopher Warren, president of the International Federation of Journalists. "One of the most frightening things about the Philippines is that there's not been a single person convicted." he added in a Radio Bandila broadcast. That creates a climate of impunity."

Since 1992, for example, CPJ has recorded only 21 instances where "masterminds"...are merely suggestions...were prosecuted. About 94 percent beat the rap.

Local newsmen see the most threatened, Lorain and Warren note. "In the Philippines journalists who are most under attack are radio broadcasters."

This is true elsewhere, as in Haiti or Nepal. The third group commonly hit are TV camera operators or video journalists. "They're clearly visible and losing point-and-shoot."

Ironically, the Philippines endorsed Unesco's 1997 resolution that urges members to "ensure any statute of limitations...when crimes are perpetrated to prevent the exercise of freedom of information and expression or...obstruction of justice." The resolution further urges governments to "refine legislation to make it possible to prosecute and sentence those who instigate the assassination of persons exercising the right to freedom of expression."

Some "progress in dealing with a legacy of violence against journalists in Chile, Afghanistan and Timor-L'Este," the NGO Reporters Without Borders notes. Given our macabre treadmill, can we make the same claim?

Or will we, instead, land in a "black list"? Included are countries where "murderers, abductors and torturers of journalists enjoy impunity." This is a journalist's version of modern homebuyers by the Nazi group or thieves of intellectual property rights.

Groups like the Center for Media Freedom are running seminars on coping with threats. The Philippine National Police offers handguns. But there's no substitute for efficient law enforcement.

For the media, the best fish jacket remains professionalism and insistence and bowing to ethical standards. "Fill too often, the public is mostly unaware but really restless," Washington Post's Meg Greenfield has noted. "On one worst days, you're fools."

The need for accuracy, context and balance persist. What is true and justifiable—and not just what rates ratings—hasn't been proven.

"Our membership has remain passive," the pooled editorial "Swarm in a Time of Trouble" noted. "We're still in flush out the lies about who flush press cards or walk in at black money negotiations." Many succumbed as bucks for those they cover. Compromise linked to values empower journalists in a of society of doomed wealth. "The decisions are all embodied in that complex we call ethics, which sets man apart from the ape," Teodoro Locsin said in the Quezon symposium.

"Affirm that chosen in a time of trouble," the pooled editorial said. "And we need not recall backward into the future "...on a macabre treadmill.

E-mail: juan_mercado@pmpb.net.ph

Damage

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

Pontius Bonbonyoshi. They are called "Cimin and Pontius" for short. Or "Pontius" for reasons now. "But I don't expect Pelita to know that.

Taddeus was and is a far more devoted supporter of Imelda Lucier than Pontius' cousin Imelda. Enraged? So what? Pelita is right: I don't know that brother do I particularly care to know. Pelita is right: I don't know that brother. It has nothing to do with what I'm saying. I never suggested that Taddeus's comments owed to lack of support for Imelda Arroyo or a change of heart over him. What I am saying precisely is that you could let Arroyo's most trusted lieutenant, her campaign manager, a crime of, as attributed to Pontificabel, but that doesn't give you the right to ask the world to forget an inquiry and move on.

My question then is: "Did it?" "This isn't just personal pain. This is a national case. This is not just an injustice done to Javier, his relatives or to all participants. This is an injustice done to the nation." I would have thought a lawyer, who is used to scrutinizing documents, would have noticed that.

Pelita says Pontificabel has no grasp on he could not have influenced the ruling. Again, I never said Judge Rudy Guevarra' ruling was revoked. I have others to argue that, if there's a case to be made for it. I did not say he decision was wrong. I said it was incomprehensible. He, I did not say it flouted ethics, I said it defied logic.

Pelita is right: Cory Aquino herself came to power but was able to find only partial justice for her husband. But we do not hear Cory asking the country to accept that fact and move on...when more than 900 have been killed and 200 disappeared, we're supposed to forget about it? Because we can't get justice for all, we should not get justice for any?

Taddeus was dead right:

House should stick to reduced pork

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cavanaugh

[illegible] Japan and former Sen. Peter Zgo, both Bicol-area leaders, should be happy over the prospect that that part of the South Rail to Bicol, the last to be rehabilitated now. After the recent train accident in Quezon, the two pushed leaders complained that Department of Budget and Management was going to use the North Rail project, funded by a Chinese government loan of $421 million, that will rehabilitate the same years-old line Manila to Malinta. They said the fund employed the Rural Railways Act of 1990 to revive a number of stations, some over 2[illegible] decades dustified, provided they stay manned by non-Transportation. Just like Duterte and Real Peter argued the Bicol was followed by Cebu, so the should-be latter retains the lion's share.

Reports from Chile, where the President has gone with other Apec leaders, say that she successfully negotiated a realignment of the $100-million Clarkfield-Subic expressway project. Instead of [illegible] it is extending to the Philippines as the rehabilitation of the South Rail projects. Former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada is not happy about it. But Mrs. Arroyo reminded Chile dentified provider of big majority son Fernando that it [illegible] Duterte son

Killing strikers to uphold rule of law?

RULE of law, it was invoked during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos to justify the declaration of martial law and the killing of 13 people in the Mendiola Massacre. Now, to justify another shooting rampage that has killed dozens of people and injured hundreds in Hacienda Luisita, it is again being invoked.

Is the act of using guns against striking workers rule of law?

The demands for land, jobs and a just and humane life by the striking farm workers and workers of Hacienda Luisita are inherent rights and legitimate demands. The environmentalists, a rube-buster pay amounting to as low as P9.50 a day, the harassments of activists and workers and the bloody dispersals of the strikers are other bothersome and peaceful rights to life. Where is the rule of law here that Rep. Neptali Gonzales and the rest of the Hacienda Luisita management are invoking?

The Cojuangcos, the Department of Labor and Employment, the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines have used all known excuses and justifications they could dream of in order to go away with bodily still and criminal liabilities as a result of the bloody Hacienda Luisita massacre. They are quick in blaming placenta "third parties and provocateurs". They are quick in blaming the Left and even quick in questioning the legality of the strike and the workers' positions. They are quick in pointing fingers at the strikers as the main provocateurs even when at the end of the rampage, all the dead bodies belonged to striking workers.

Since the DOLE strike—which the Cojuangcos and the DOLE refer to as the "rule of law"—justify the use of guns in the Luisita dispersal? What is rule of law when after the bloody carnage, more than dozens, including two children, lay dead, Ichiong hides?

For all the people criminally and civilly liable for this massacre to get away with delivering justice not only to the families of the dead and injured, the Cojuangcos must primarily deliver justice by going what is due and what is right to the workers of Hacienda Luisita.

—CARMEN DUNA,
National Federation
of Peasant Women's Institute,
40-A Maganda-dila St.,
Brgy. Payatas,
Quezon City

BID traps, only in the Philippines

PEOPLE going to the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID) and ex-asking for assistance in order to avoid the dreaded 'asaweri,' a virtual trap has been set up by the Intramuros Pay Parking & Towing People for motorists.

When I went to the BID with my wife to get a certain clearance required for her forthcoming trip to the United States, I noticed my car was the only one inside our BID building when there was a long row of other parked vehicles. After my wife was informed at the BID office that the processing of her clearance would take about two hours, she told me to just leave her at the BID office so I could proceed to my office in Quezon City.

When I went back to my car, it was great! I swear that the unrealistic tow-away sign which had appeared there was not in its place at the time I parked my car. But even more puzzling was why only my car disappeared at a time of about 12 minutes after the tow-away. A Intramuros traffic aide that the other vehicles belonged to BID personnel.

Good harassee! A no-parking area, but not for BID "public-servants." If this is one clear legislature, some people must be above the law!

The towing service that took away my car used nothing but brains and muscles without ever leaving a note advising me as to where it could be claimed. (This is an appropriate ground for charging them with car theft which I intend to do shortly.) The operations of this towing service are the Parking and Traffic Office under the supervision of a certain Bodet, to Alberto appears to be now. Even the three policemen assigned in the parking area did not know the proposed's impounding area; they pointed me to three wrong places. I found the right place after at least rolling around a vast area. (I spent a few minutes away from the BID building. I paid P1,500 as towing fee for that duration.)

I found the place manned by people who hastily talked or responded to complaints and questions, except with wild, blank looks.

Incidentally, did you know that people against whom no hold-departure order has been issued by the courts, are prevented from leaving the country just because they have the same names as some people with pending court cases and they are able to get cleared at BID's discretion? If you think getting these clearances is easy, think again. My wife had to wait that on her three days and spent close to P1,000 in different fees (P500 for BID clearance), including affidavits and notarial fees charged by lawyers who are literally holding office space at the towage room. Indeed only in the Philippines!

—CARLITO S. VILLANUEVA,
62 Ilaw St., Sta. Mesa Heights,
Quezon City

Hoping again

I WAS happy as now in your Business section the news "SSS collection reaches P32B in first 9 months." I read the report in two, hoping to come across something desirable for me in my senior years.

For to me, an ordinary SSS worker, a gain in report such as P32 billion does not improve financial standing is not enough. It is an increase in our measly monthly pension that counts. I look forward to the time when the Social Security System will announce an adjustment in the pensions of impoverished pensioners.

—ARCHIMEDES S. SILLO,
182 K-South St. 2, Bagbag Village,
Novaliches, Lee Plaza City

Blind to population problem

THE [illegible] government should take immediate steps to curb the runaway population growth. It is an plain to see that the root cause of many of the country's social and economic problems is the overpopulation.

The country simply does not have the infrastructure and enough resources to adequately support the population now and the future looks even worse.

It is beyond comprehension that many individuals running family enough to support themselves choose to have so many children. Where is their personal responsibility here? It seems that the government is turning a blind eye to this major problem. It could be that many government officials are spineless and lacking the guts to go against the Church hierarchy.

Although the decision on family size rests on the individuals, the government has a major role to enhance big them on the advantages of a smaller family. The government could offer free family planning education, materials and surgical procedures.

I still have to see a government official, out and the media bring this to a meaningful discussion. It seems that everyone is turning a blind eye and pretending that this problem does not exist.

—JOSE BOLIOS,
San Marcos, Kalibo(aq), 5600,
jmall3@sbcglobal.net

Where's UP?

THE INQUIRER wrote "Only 2 graduates of each make the grade, says UP BOARD" (PDI, 11/10/04) it is so misleading by saying that "only two of the country's 101 graduate schools offering programs in education, public administration and business scored satisfactorily in the."

Therefore, it means that hundreds of schools in University and De La Salle University as the two schools. So, where does this place the University of the Philippines?

Only here does the article reveal that the study conducted by the Board for Secondary and Private Education, they have been outlawed to private educational institutions. To be more accurate, the lawyers would have simply added the word "private" after "DEC" in the opening line.

This other thing reporters could have done the public a great service if it also listed down the schools and the ratings each received. Such a list would have guided the parents and students accordingly.

Putting it another way, what purpose does the study serve if the consumers have no access to its results? Isn't the Commission on Higher Education so college and post-graduate situations what is the Bureau of Food and Drugs is to food and drugs?

And isn't the lawyer mandated by law to warn the public about adulterated food and drugs?

—MARIANO C. JAVIER,
mcj_96@hotmail.com

Ombudsman must focus on work, not image-building

THIS is my reaction to the news item titled "Ombudsman to recruit citizens to grab" (PDI, 10/24/04). Think as well, instead Ombudsman Antonio Eusebio's mind that image-building project in coordination with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the National Press Club. The project was called Sumbatwatch and the purpose was to report incidents of graft and corruption to the Ombudsman. The undersigned, Sonny Dimbungan Mangaoang Servacio and Rina Antonio represented the IBP Ombudsman and NPC, respectively, in the campaign.

Nothing came out of it because while many "corruption prevention units" (CPUs)—made up of concerned citizens—were reporting incidents of graft and corruption left and right, the graft investigators of the Ombudsman were just sitting on the reports. For example, I reported a P13-million grossly overpriced flood control project in Cotabato, Mindanao. But the investigator assigned to the case did not gather sufficient evidence. She was there for the asking. Instead, he dismissed the complaint after almost two years. If the case is done so, a lawyer representing the JBP here would have to go on ordinary duties who will report

Wrong turns?

IN YOUR editorial "Arafat and Palestine" (PDI, 11/14/04) you said: "When Israel took a hard rule to the right, at a time when her [Arafat's] arch-friend of the Palestinian leadership was caught in the politics of intelligent, taking part in the continuing peace process [by allowing Israel to use other countries] explains [on her to the second Palestinian intifada (Arabic for 'shaking off')."

this longer to mention that one of the major reasons Israel took a hard turn to the right when Arafat was head of the PA, was when he allowed Hamas to keep explosives in Israel, and kept calling for Jihad. Many Israelis, who at the time had some belief that Arafat had changed his ways, lost hope in reconciling that period.

—JOSE PEARL Israel,
inspector@philonline.net.il

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Do you think President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is addressing the fiscal crisis with effective solutions?

I doubt if we will see from a fiscal crisis for we have to [illegible] **—EDGARDO MALLIN-DA,** [illegible]

NO. Because taxes get their share the unfavorable push being added to will go to their pockets again. **—Joel Ignalaan,** Ironton

[illegible] **YES.** Because taxes get their share the unfavorable push being added to will go to their pockets again. **—Joel Ignalaan,** Ironton

[illegible] **YES.** Because taxes get their share the unfavorable push being added to will go to their pockets again. **—Joel Ignalaan,** Ironton

[illegible] **NO.** She is not practicing what she says. She is calling [illegible] **—Edilberto G. Faire,** Antipolo[illegible]

[illegible] **NO.** The crisis is a result of rampant corruption in our government, a problem which [illegible] has been killing my soldiers. **—Isolde B. Gonzales,** [illegible]

[illegible] **NO.** She blames the problem all to [illegible] **—Edilberto G. Faire,** Antipolo[illegible]

[illegible] **NO.** Because the problem will be

[author block illegible]

Across the NATION

[author block illegible]

Death toll from 'Unding' rises to 29

THE DEATH toll in the wake of Typhoon "Unding" has risen to 29 while at least 74 persons were declared missing, authorities said yesterday.

AFTER the onslaught of Unding, take-do-earth on Lucena City allowing three-tots to play on the city's pier.

The provincial disaster coordinating council (PDCC) of Camarines Sur reported 13 dead, most of Quezon and one died and. Shot of Oriental Mindoro reported 15 dead.

The PDCC said at least 11 fishermen from Francisco Gomez were missing and about 40,000 individuals fled their homes and sought refuge in schools in Camarines Sur.

Power has yet to be restored to the province.

The lone fatality in Quezon province was one old victim Quezon of Dalnacion Villages in San Francisco town in the Bicolor Peninsula.

The boy died when strong winds felled a tree and brought it crashing into Quezon's house.

The boy's father, Joselito, was seriously injured.

Thirteen fishermen from San Francisco town were reported missing.

The 12 crewmen of another fishing boat, TK Dennis boys, were also missed.

The PDCC in General Mindoro cited 40 persons were missing.

Provincial authorities said at least P491 million worth of crops were damaged in the province.

Electricity was cut off in the province and authorities said they restored reports on damages and casualties the night or mornings.

Ramon Soler, officer in charge of the 902nd provincial mobile group of the Philippine National Police, said fishermen who were caught in the middle of the storm were mostly from Sabang.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Oriental Mindoro passed a resolution declaring the province in a state of calamity.

Reports were lacking for dozens of fishermen who were lost at sea, according to a report of the Agence France-Presse (AFP).

The AFP quoted Antonette Rubio, coast guard spokesperson, as saying the missing were local sports more than 40 boats in raging waters and that initial searches of the region were underway. "We are using choppers [helicopters] to look for them," the AFP quoted Rubio as saying.

The Coast Guard, however, said four of 16 trawlers crew members who were reported missing in Romblon on Saturday had been found and rescued.

The four survivors were found in the vicinity of Simara and Banton islands in Romblon at 9 a.m. yesterday, two days after their pot lost in sea values the MT Tina took, said Rubio.

The MT Tina was supposed to seek shelter from the storm in one of the islands of Romblon or Sibuyan, but the vessel was caught in the middle of the storm.

Rubio said search and rescue operations were ongoing to locate four still missing crew members. He said the Coast Guard widened its search area in case the missing men had drifted.

Rubio said the Coast Guard is also searching for a crew member of the MB Lady Jessa that capsized off Romblon yes., Oriental Mindoro.

After hitting the Bicol province early last week, the storm went for a second pass at the weekend before plowing through the islands of Marinduque, Mindoro and Cuyo on its way to the South China Sea.

Unding sank or capsized 46 fishing boats off Masbate, Marinduque, Romblon, the Coron island group and off the Bicolor peninsula near Sorsogon.

The southern section of Mindoro was "heavily devastated" with houses torn down and power and telephone services cut off.

Unding is now churning over in the South China Sea, but the weather bureau said they are monitoring up to two pressure area in the Philippine this part of June, which they said could develop into a storm or typhoon.

About 20 typhoons or storms hit the Southeast Asian archipelago annually, particularly during an annual average of about 1000 lives, according to official figures.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman said food and supplies were being sucked to the heavily hit areas.

"Many houses have lost their roofs, if not totally damaged," Soliman told reporters. Reports from Isabela Solomon in **Bicolo, Juan Escandor Jr. /Iloilo Muller Jr. and Mindanao Desks, PH Southern Luzon Bureau and AFP**

IBP condemns killing of Aklan lawyer

By Homer B Burgos Jr
PDI Visayas Bureau

KALIBO CITY—The Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) yesterday condemned the killing of Aklan lawyer Edgar Cobre Sr., as it vowed justice over the increasing number of murdered lawyers in the country.

"The killings of lawyers are getting rampant and many of the killings remain unsolved," said Atty. Jonathan Cadiz, IBP national president, in a telephone interview.

Six lawyers have been killed this year, and Cadiz, many of them involving commercial cases.

"Justice will suffer for cases of the killings," said Cadiz.

He said he would suggest to the board of governors of the 40,000-member organization to pass a resolution condemning the killing.

He also called on authorities to solve Cobre's murder and that of other lawyers.

Unidentified men gunned down Cobre on Saturday in front of his apartment in the capital town of Kalibo.

He died inside the hotel's restaurant where he was driving with at least 17 bullet wounds inflicted on the head and body with a .45 caliber and a 9-mm handgun.

His murder came a month after Cebu-based lawyer Adriel Ala. Sun Yong-gon was shot dead inside his residence on Dec. 11 allegedly by a member of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA).

Reapor was the private prosecutor who prosecuted case against controversial cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr.

Human rights lawyer Amy Misamis, vice mayor of Bangui town in Ilocos Norte, Theodore Antonio Oscal Jr. Mayor Jose Marie Antonio, a teacher and acting secretary general of Kampanyang Bayanihan.

Another IBP member, corporate lawyer Nicholas Swang, was shot dead on April 12 along Shaw Boulevard in Pasig City.

Supt. Odilon de Magnaoana, acting Aklan police director, said an investigation was still being conducted to determine the identities of the gunmen as well as the motive in the killing. Ilida reports from Boni Ilarde Filkil, PDI Visayas Bureau

MECHANICS
A worker in Lucena City displays a gadget he uses to squeeze milk out of coconuts, making this procedure easier and faster.

Water level at Cagayan's primary dam critically low despite typhoon rains

CABARTAN, Isabela—Despite typhoon-induced rains the past week in Cagayan Valley, water level in the Magat hydroelectric dam in nearby Ramon town has remained critically low, the National Irrigation Administration said on Monday.

The water level at Magat Dam, one of the biggest dams in Southeast Asia and the primary water in Cagayan Valley's rice granaries in Cagayan Valley, has dropped to 181.23 meters, 9.57 meters below the normal level, Antonio Ramos, operations manager of NIA-Magat River Integrated Irrigation System, said.

"The critical level of the Magat dam has been attributed to the low rainfall at the watershed despite the week-long rains brought about by Unding," he said.

He said the average inflow was recorded on Nov. 20 as 70 cubic meters per second, 60 cubic meters per second below the required inflow.

About 75,000 hectares of rice land in Isabela and Cagayan and parts of Quirino and Nueva Ecija have been provided with irrigation water from the dam.

But in some luck, about 50,000 hectares of farmland will likely not be irrigated next planting season, Ramos said, due to underground irrigation system, said.

More than 3,000 hectares within the South High Canal in Santiago City and the towns of Cordon in Isabela and Ilillan, Cabarroguis and Aglipay town in Quirino will also suffer.

The South Low Canal supplies water to the province's rice granaries in which include Naguilian, Burgos, Cabatuan, San Mariano, Aurora, San Manuel, Reina, and Malig covering more than 48,000 hectares.

Ramos noted the low water level may last fully this year when drought brought as a result current of water to the dam's catchment.

The critical dam water level who considered the worst in the last five years, he said. **Ilida Filapor Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau**

Negros mayor seeks to outlaw solicitation

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE—But up with getting substitution letters, a mayor of a southern town in Negros Oriental wants to outlaw them.

Mayor Antonio Nicanor of Siaton town has asked the municipal council to consider putting together an ordinance that will prohibit all forms of solicitations in the town.

He said various groups visit solicitation letters to public offices, officials and private individuals, including those seeking support for registered projects, especially during special occasions or even during the point-of-sense.

These were only a few solicitations that came to mind. But the letters start piling up towards fiesta, Christmas and election time.

Siaton, about 61 km north of Dumaguete, celebrates its fiesta every June 13.

Reporters said that instead of soliciting, they would rather leave the task of self-reliance and should not engage in activities that they could not afford to do more.

The practice of soliciting funds, he said, "will also discourage businesses from coming into Siaton. But once the ordinance is put into place, he added, investments will flow into the town.

Tournament organizers said they were confident the tournament would draw its usual participants despite the nonappearance of some stars.

"What will we do if someone runs up and then threatens us? Nothing changes from there. They will have been from the city to the house," Tarnate said.

"It took Thailand 20 days to give the all-clear sign. Only they are from here [Tournament Association] to [Philippine]. Anyway, we are looking at only a few more days before we can get a clean bill of health, so we can sit with," he added.

Baguio elementary and high schools reported a high absentee on Monday, indicating that parents no longer feared the dengue.

Mayor tells tourists to stay away from Baguio City

By Frank Cimatu
and Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Mayor Bandie Fariñas is asking tourists to stay away from the summer resort city as long as there are no new deaths for three days. Following a weekend filled with dread due to the outbreak of a meningitis strain that has killed eight people in two months.

"Baguio will not make the health of our visitors. Tourists is a paramount consideration in Baguio, which we do not want to victims by giving people less liberal vacation environment. The best-order thing to do is to tell them the truth," Fariñas told the business on Monday.

Reports of a meningococcemia epidemic in the city over the weekend sent families, he said, although Baguio would need to get clearance from the Department of Health to make sure the disease had been contained.

The DOH warned yesterday about the number of Baguio cases, which they initially classified as potential meningococcemia but which turned out to be typhoid fever.

Dr. Antonio Bautista, spokesperson of a DOH interagency team, said no new cases had been reported in the past 24 hours.

He said screening their for would help contain the epidemic that followed the meningococcemia deaths.

Four adults died on Nov. 18 and 19. Almost immediately after news spread, people rushing to Session Road, the main street in downtown Baguio, were spotted wearing surgical masks or more mask wearing than those with families, especially as they inspected the hour traffic.

At a meeting inside 100 City Baguio, all clerks were surgical masks. One of the clerks said Dino Bautista office advised them to wear masks because of the fear of dealing with children, one of the high-risk groups for meningococcemia.

Private hospitals immediately launched their patients and prescribed antibiotics to their staff.

There were reports of tourists leaving the city after news on the disease hit the roads.

Jay Ashcroftes, vice president for security safety and external affairs of Camp John Hay Development Corp., said 80 percent of guests at Camp John Hay Manor checked out on Saturday morning.

Anthony de Leon, general manager of the Baguio Country Club, said 20 percent of their guests either cancelled their reservations or checked out.

Club officials and CAR-based executives screened Dumaoi's travel advisory to determine whether it required them to reschedule the annual 54-hr golf tournament.

But they concluded the event—all of the tournament, which is on its 55th year, should proceed on Sunday, Nov. 28, as scheduled.

Transport strike planned in Visayas

By Nestor F Burgos Jr. and Johara B. Balandan
INQ Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Transport groups in Iloilo, Cebu, Guimaras and Aklan are planning a four-day strike to protest continued increases in oil prices.

Organizers said the strike in Iloilo, Guimaras and Aklan would be held Nov. 24-27 while that in Cebu would be on Nov. 24.

At least 20 associations in Iloilo under the Transport Solidarity Against Unjust Policies and Executive Revenues (Tsuper) said they would paralyze public transport to pressure the government to stop successive oil prices.

"We call on the government to impose controls on the oil prices and scrap the 10 Inequitable Law (Republic Act 8479)," said Jun Medina, coordinator of the Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Operator Nalalansilo (Piston) in Panay.

He said the drivers would apply for another fare increase if their demands were not met by the government.

But the Federation of Iloilo Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations (Filoda), the umbrella organization of jeepney drivers and operators associations in Iloilo province, said it would not join the strike.

Leaders of the strike said they would also freeze public transport in Buenavista town in the island province of Guimaras.

In Aklan, transport groups under the federation of Aklan Unregistered Public Transport Inc. (AUPTI) and Piston, will stop plying their routes on Nov. 24 and 25.

REBUILDING
An unidentified worker of Hacienda Luisita welds the iron grills of a fence to the sugar estate that was destroyed at the height of protests by a group of striking workers. At least 11 persons were reported killed during the strike dispersal.

Ease penalty on marijuana, councilor says

DUMAGUETE CITY—A city councilor member who is also a medical practitioner is working to "decriminalize" possession and use of marijuana.

Councilor Noel de Asua, a physician accredited with the Dangerous Drugs Board, made the proposal in a Kapihan Forum last week at the Bethel Guesthouse.

Possession of at least 500 grams of marijuana in the country is punishable by death under Republic Act 9165. Possession of marijuana, weighing five grams to 499 grams, is punishable by life imprisonment while possession of less than five grams is punishable by a 12-year jail term.

Instead of a prison term, Dr. Asua is proposing to impose only administrative sanctions.

"If we decriminalize marijuana, we will decongest our judicial system and we will be unburdening our law enforcement authorities," he said, citing developments in other countries, which have adopted the same stand.

He said he shared the position that marijuana use did not make a person violent, unlike shabu. Marijuana "keeps people in their place," he said.

He also debunked common notion that once a person became an addict, he would always be an addict. "You can get out of addiction due to an overlying reason," he reasoned, citing his own experience on quitting smoking.

Last year, authorities seized some 14.4 million kilograms of marijuana plants and products throughout the country.

Marijuana is grown throughout the country. The largest areas of cultivation are found primarily in the mountainous areas of northern Luzon, central Visayas, and central, southern and western Mindanao.

Fernando Martinez, the provincial action officer of the Anti-Drug Abuse and Prevention Council, frowned on Dr. Asua' suggestion.

Army says only 2 dead in air strike

COTABATO CITY—The military yesterday confirmed launching an air assault on suspected terrorist lairs in Maguindanao, but said the casualties were not only two suspected terrorists.

Two MILF[1] men—Abd. Gani, Hadi Ibrahim, 6th Infantry Battalion chief, and three Islamic Liberation Front spokesperson Eid Kabalu—denied having said 10 persons were killed during the attack.

Reyes said the air raid was launched after military intelligence agents reported a meeting between the Abu Sayyaf and members of the Jemaah Islamiyah in Maguindanao.

Reyes said the air strike was preemptive.

He said the assault, launched by six Sokol fighter planes, had limited whatever terror plot was being prepared during that meeting. He said the terror plot could have been designed for execution in other areas too.

Reyes said the air strike was designed "for specific targets with pinpoint accuracy."

He said the "bombs used were commensurate to the targets."

It was unclear whether the military made any arrests or rescued more kidnapping victims.

Kabalu said two civilians, including a girl, were slightly wounded.

A motor boat and three houses, one of which was owned by MILF fighter Datalo Alabebedut Bindok, were damaged.

Hundreds of residents in Barira and nearby villages have fled their homes.

Kabalu said the raid was "steadfast foe."

He said the military launched the air strikes without coordinating with the MILF as arrangement provided for in an Aug. 7, 2000 ceasefire agreement between the government and the guerrillas.

Charlie Reyes, INQ Mindanao Bureau

Apec leaders back new antiterror plans

Front page 1

leaders only on counter-terrorism measures—Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo and New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark. We have now a real and blue-chip economic platform."

The priorities for each Apec leader were informed with different but diverging, frustrating kinds, said Lee, whose country is the host of the 2006 Apec summit in Hawaii. Bowers, the sceptic. Hundreds of thousands of people have been up in three months to make and send for an end to a $1,300.

In the boutique Bridestones that Lagos used in Taranaki, Apec menu for wives—whose presence is meant for mostly half of the world's trade—promised to "continue our work with a renewed sense of urgency, in order to achieve a balanced, overall outcome that will meet the high levels of ambition set for these negotiations."

The 148-nation WTO talks in Mexico last year collapsed after the rich countries refused to budge on their subsidies for their farmers, and endorsement by Apec leaders to reinstate the momentum it sees as important because Apec economies represent nearly half the planet's trade.

"It may ago, we left Cancun with a complete failure," Lagos said. "Half time, in great part owing to the efforts here, we have been able to move forward and we are ready to negotiate but not with optimism."

US President George W. Bush also endorsed Apec's efforts, saying: "We've got to reject the blocks and barriers that block economies and people, and I believe that trade, politics, we can continue to grow."

Business leaders wanted Apec to focus its formal study for a proposed free trade area of the done. People that would shoot all other trade barriers.

Apec leaders called the study a "relevant, practical" but stopped short of endorsing it, apparently worried about complicating the WTO negotiations.

Counterterrorism

The Apec leaders also approved counterterrorism measures aimed at protecting food security, increasing commercial flight safety and making more shipping to safe from attacks by terrorists.

"We must not spend relieved Apec economies to take measures toward the codification and implementation of, or the commitment to, the Apec Secure Trade in the Region initiative," the declaration said.

"Through these measures, we will collectively work to combat the threat of terrorism and to disrupt its efforts on the people, and the economies of the region," the declaration said.

"In this context, we agreed to take steps to cut off terrorists' access to the international financial system, including implementing standards and recommendations on combating terrorist financing and money laundering."

The leaders promised support for the trade treaty for three areas, but without Russia and Vietnam to join the WTO, to give a prompt conclusion to outgoing talks.

The declaration also vowed to intensify efforts to fight jobless and private sector corruption, which it termed "a serious threat to good governance and democracy."

Apec started in 1989 as a gathering to boost trade among Pacific Rim nations, but its focus has broadened to terror issues to include security and flow.

While many have criticized the shift away from purely economic issues, several Apec leaders and business and security have become inseparable because of increased investors around the globe.

Bush spent much of his time on the sidelines of the summit trying to win international support to pitch North Korea to halt the communist country's nuclear weapons program. Discussion talks on the issue, which also involve South Korea and the United States is pushing for another round early next year.

Dinner canceled

An elaborate state dinner planned for Bush and 200 others Sunday night was canceled after Chile lobbied at security concerns sought by the US Secret Service, including a demand that all guests pass through metal detectors.

Instead, Chilean President Ted Bush and Chilean President Ricardo Lagos to instead hold a small "social dinner" with a handful of aides from each side.

Anti-Bush and anti-globalization protests, many of them violent, marred the days leading up to the summit. But by the weekend, the protests were smaller and peaceful.

On Sunday night, about 50 people lit candles and stood in silence in a convoy marching from Bolivia and before took place in the 1970s during Chile's military dictatorship under Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Protesters say the push to sign free trade deals is a ploy by rich countries and multinational corporations to boost profits, and does not give meaningful benefits to poor nations mired in misery.

A Think Bank study estimates as the world's core losses if the WTO talks collapse could help 140 million people escape poverty while adding $96 billion to the global economy by 2015.

The WTO talks have faced deadlock. Until in 2001 it was supposed to be wrapped up by Dec. 31. Everybody acknowledges that the deadline will be missed.

The next Apec summit will be held in Busan, South Korea.

The Apec leaders are from Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam.

With AP report

AN UNIDENTIFIED worker at Hacienda Luisita displays the hands that had allegedly suffered most of his life without his voting able to save the land or enjoy the fruits of his labors. He and several other workers of the estate brought their plight to the door steps of the Department of Land Reform in Quezon City.

Luisita faction rejects new vote on stock scheme

Front page 1

said the farmer-stockholders based a report of the 1989 referendum when beneficiaries were supposedly told to vote for the stock distribution option (SDO), or be banished from the plantation.

As Congress prepared to open extraordinary sessions next week to debate Arroyo's call for the abolition of the SDO, police and AFP units were deployed at the plantation during the violence had turned ugly as the gunpowder burns.

The possible test results conducted by the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute using laboratory would suggest none of the 46 had fired their guns during the incident.

Previous tests showed most policemen and three slain protesters were positive for gunpowder burns.

Asked Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman insisted that seven people—not 14, as claimed by the workers—died in the violence on the plantation owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino.

"The official death count is seven, and not all I saw [workers of the Hacienda Luisita]," Soliman said in a press briefing.

Soliman said the families of the seven killed would be given "scholarship assistance and" cash for surviving educational assistance for those who lost children."

Cojuangco family side

Speaking to the Cojuangco family, lawyer Rolando Cojuangco assured "tentative funeral" of adhering to the law rules he said joined the strike, and of intimidating strikebreaking workers and causing the destruction of 300 hectares of crops.

A family statement said the violence-hit plantation between the Cojuangcos and the Aquinos workers were supposedly told to vote for the stock distribution option (SDO), or be banished from the plantation.

"Clearly, it is not just the minority of the Cojuangco family at stake here. What is more important is the welfare of thousands of farm workers, are striking laborers and their families," it said.

Strikers want land

Ryan Galang, president of Apalada and head of the striking UR are hot on, said the strikers wanted a redistribution of the hacienda land according to the land reform program, instead of being covered by the corporation that controls the 6,000-hectare plantation.

"The issue for that the overwhelming majority of workers would be for workers participated in the strike is a growing instrument in our growing call for the junking of the SDO," he said.

Asiatide is a peasant organization in Luzon and is affiliated with the militant Bayan Muna bloc in Congress.

"It is not only us who work in the refinery and plantation who are against the GEO. Almost all of the 30,000 residents of the hacienda inside the hacienda are with us," Galang said.

P195 per day

Arroyo said the majority of stockholders of Hacienda Luisita has controlled the company in a way that the farmer-stockholders get minimal and dwindling benefits.

Farmer-stockholders are each paid P195 per working day which is usually just once a week, said the group. After deductions, the take-home pays amounts to just P9.50, it said.

Deadly Ramos, secretary general of the BMF said the central issues of the strike was the junking of the stock scheme.

Ramos said Representative Aquino was not telling the whole story when he said that the workers had struck over wheelchairs for the SDO on 1989 and 1999.

"The farm workers said that the rules set by the Cojuangcos were simple: vote for the SDO or get out of the hacienda," Ramos said.

Outside forces

Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas also blamed "outside forces" for the violence.

"This would not have happened if there were not outside parties goading them to the woods," she said. "Our first priority is to make sure that those people in the picket line to come and try to breach the police line," she said on cable station ABC.

Sec. Ramos stressed that only about 10 of the 7,000 registered workers were on strike. "But you know if you have a group of 10 being suppressed by 5,000, the peaceful ones are harmless."

At the woods Kapihan at Manila's presidential press center, the acting Press presidential spokesperson Ignacio, said it was not the farmers of Luisita or the workers of the sugar central who created trouble. "But the members of Bayan, Bayan patrol, Bayanang LPS, ACT, DOE, Bayan Muna and Anakpawis."

Ballot snarls

He said the groups' delegations, numbering about 5,000, came from Tarlac, Cavite, Quezon, Laguna and from Bayan Bayan, Batangas and Bulacan.

The PNP crime laboratory report showed 41 "indeterminate"—13 caused by ballots—on the 9,200 ballots-in rebels used by the government troops during the dispersal. Deputy Director General and Task Force Luisita head Reynaldo Velasco said.

Velasco said he had ordered investigators to gather as many slugs as possible so they might be "even matched" with firearms seized from protesters and with those surrendered by government troops.

Besides looking for the triggerman, the PNP is also investigating the possible involvement of the communist-led New People's Army in the clashes.

'Neutral' witnesses

Velasco said 23 percent of the protesters who dashed with authorities were from Bataan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Nueva Vizcaya.

The National Bureau of Investigation said it was looking for several witnesses to the violence.

NBI Director Joel Reynaldo Lim said the bureau wanted to speak to credible witnesses "who are neutral" to the violence. Reporters Jose Maria Bonifacio, Christian Vicente Jalon, Lalaine Javellana, Jerome Aning, Artie B. Sebastian and Cherlaine Catacutan, Inquirer Central Luzon Bureau Chief Jun Pin contributed Luzon Bureau.

No budget approval, no P35-M pork barrel

Front page 1

Just projects refer to funding for schools, hospitals, medicines, to medicines through the Department of Health, and the purchase of basic relief supply facilities like patrol.

Hard projects refer to public works like the construction of roads, bridges and irrigation facilities.

The P35 million will be for the first allocation to be received by each member of the 13th Congress, which convened in July after the national elections on May 10.

Cash allocation

Added only three second to his delay in the release, Drilon said: "It's still due to the cash position of the government."

Both the release of the Sums after the passage on second reading of the national budget, "we can go home and sell our constituents that we have funds for projects," Sen. Ralph Recto said.

Collin said lawmakers would then tell government agencies implementing these projects to start the preparations, such as bidding.

But it would only be in February that the DBM could issue notices of cash allocation (NCAs), he said. An NCA is an advisory that funds can be drawn in payment for contracts.

Publish pork projects

Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (JD-Isabela) Sen's appropriations committee chair, said the House would request the publication of all activities funded by the pork barrel.

"It would be preferable you said for a House member to advertise a per project in Edwardo Ermita-Hidalgo's daily to send from it later," Andaya said in a statement.

He said that the 2005 national budget would carry a special provision requiring the DBM to publish once a year all the projects in a national newspaper.

Andaya recalled that the DBM used to label our interpellation open for that purpose but the practice was discontinued in 1999. "It's time to come back the practice now," he said.

At present, the DBM is posting pork barrel projects on its official website.

"It's a good practice, but rules ensure a computer to the insurance?" Andaya said.

At a press conference, Representatives Jacinto Antonio Cortes (BFC, South Cotabato) and Mario Aguja (Abakada) said the continued pressure was to blame for making the pork barrel a necessity for legislators.

If the government had been addressing the needs of the districts, constituents would no longer knock on the doors of members of the House for projects and their localities, according to the trustee and agaja.

DBM prerogative

In the Senate, the chair of the finance committee said it was really up to the DBM to release or not the pork barrel allocations of lawmakers next year.

"Even if the Senate and the House pass a provision appropriating the full amount of pork barrel for legislators, the funds would not be released unless the DBM gave the go-signal," Sen. Edgardo Angara said.

Villar reminded that the Senate had not yet met on the House decision to reinstate the pork barrel at their current levels until next fiscal year. The Senate had cut P486 million in the P1.02P. With a report from Christina O. Avendaño

When a pork lover is a croc

Front page 1

pounds/Where

"Reptiles come in different sizes," said Zamora, who is busily remembered as the lawmaker who volunteered to carry the bailor boxes during the confession canvassing of election returns in the presidential race in Congress in June.

"There is the iguana in the ensemble, which perhaps would gobble up 1 kilogram of the pork he eats," he said. "The crocodile is more of pork barrel funds in this class would be lost to corruption funds to ghost projects and other irregular practices."

Unlike some congressmen, however, a crocodile only eats once a week and then disappears until the next meal.

"Then there's the tapeworm executive branch, which probably would eat about 10 percent of his allowance," Zamora said, meaning half of the pork funds are pocketed by lawmakers, contractors, officials and employees involved in projects and even representatives of the Commission on Audit.

"There's also the rule ignotus which would take about 20 percent," he said.

And then there's the common house lizard or fundi which just needs his true form of grass to come its way," Zamora said. He belongs to no class, he added.

"Nagbibitaw ang ako dang may mag-salot if wala' ba anyone who wants to give," he said in jest.

'Unfair'

Zamora, who failed to be elected senator even after pardoning at the House, stressed that while the system of pork barrel, officially called the Priority Development Assistance Fund, "is not entirely pork free, it is unfair to hand congressmen or other executive at monthly funds."

He said he himself didn't know of any congressman who pocketed all of his pork barrel funds, although he added: "Having commission is done in all branches of government, particularly in executive agencies."

NO. 48 senators too could voluntarily give commission, he said. "In some cases, if one wants to pass, he will have to do so."

It's up to the voters of the pork barrel to prove that the fund was indeed being misused, he said.

'Woven-sent'

"People should stop criticizing the pork barrel system because for many of us who live to be thing provinces, the pork barrel is the fastest food delivery," Zamora said.

"In my case, anyone can announce [works] and just feed the funds allocated for my district here from Senate to the last senator—for projects for my constituents," the Lakas lawmaker said.

Zamora said he used his pork barrel fund to put in, among other projects, the electrification of 300 schools, the yearly payment of health insurance premiums for 1,200 health workers, and the 19-million study subsidy to the Senior Basketball.

"So it is the P70 million allocation per district is not enough to meet all the needs of my people. Even if you add P30 million, it is still not enough," he said.

And what does Zamora's Lakas-Arroyo campaign plan to reclaim the pork barrel of congressmen to Pati million?

"How? Just would be a tragedy," he said.

Be watchdogs . . .

From page A1

per is to be a watchdog, not to be any body's puppy dog or toy."

Among those in her audience were National Artists F. Sionil Jose, Napoleon Abueva and Virgilio Almario, outgoing UP president Francisco Nemenzo, former UP president Jose Abueva, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism head Sheila Coronel, Inquirer editor in chief Letizia Jimenez Magsaysay and other editors, linguistic polisher Isagani Cruz, UP faculty members and three Communication students.

Values of Florido

Nicanor Tiongson, UP College of Mass Communication dean, said the award was for media practitioners who uphold the values of individual hero Marcelo H. del Pilar but also need the pen name Florido.

"Inquirer deserves to become the symbol, heart of the ideals and values of the college," Tiongson said.

Apostol said a newspaper must keep its editorial integrity regardless of its owners' interests.

She related how former President Ferdinand Marcos' defense minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, tried to get control of the Inquirer in 1989.

"If Enrile or any other politician were to end up owning even enough shares in PDI, it would never happen openly," she said.

Defying powers-that-be

Apostol cited instances related to her by Inquirer editors the Inquirer's journalistic integrity was challenged by the powers-that-be:

• October 1993: The only paper that rose a POLI salvo on former President Fidel Ramos and his supposed romantic links with socialite Sharmaine "Baby" Arroyo, the incumbent was harassed and got a hostile threat.

• January 1995: The Inquirer went ahead with a series on Speaker Jose de Venecia's supposedly unpaid bribed homeless PBL lawyers had gone through the story and after it got hit Venecia's aide.

• May 1996: The Inquirer ran stories on the Lopez family's summit for the North Luzon Expressway rehabilitation despite threats and pressures from ABS-CBN owners, who happened to be related by affinity to the business owners.

Despite risks

• August 1996: The Inquirer ran reports on the pork barrel, prompting angry reactions from Congress, some of whose members entered the newspaper pushcart.

• August 1998: The Inquirer ran stories about former President Joseph Estrada's alleged excesses. Despite calls by Palace executives to its editor in chief and to president, the paper went on with the story about Estrada's US-based resorts who, it said, was on the Palace payroll.

• September 1998: The Inquirer risked losing advertising income when it reported allegations that business tycoon Lucio Tan had diverted income from Philippine Airlines to his other companies.

Losing advertisers

• April 1999: The Inquirer ignored 400-500 readers' boycott Kenneth Brimble's plot to kill a story on a finance company expressing her Mercedes-Benz.

• April 1999: Re the Inquirer's unflattering stories about Estrada, atomic grocerist and cronies withdrew their ads. The ad boycott lasted until after November 1999.

"An unexpected outcome of the ad boycott was the unprecedented outpouring of public support which translated into the projection of Inq7.net as a viable and further credible news medium by readership and advertising," Apostol said.

She suggested that "Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect," by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, be required reading in journalism schools.

She lauds conglomerates that consolidate or influence news adherence to the truth, social responsibility and independence, she said.

UP regents break deadlock, select 1st woman president

From page A1

message to Romulo after the voting.

A JD Agricultural graduate from UP Los Baños in 1972, Romulo obtained her master's degree in agribusiness management from UP Diliman in 1977 and her doctorate in business administration also in Univ. UP Diliman in 1985.

She went on to teach business administration, and through the years held various administrative positions: faculty regent (1989), university secretary (1988-1991), vice chancellor (1985-1988) and chancellor of UP Diliman, a position she held in 1991-93 and from 1995 to the present.

Centennial president

With a one-year term, Romulo holds the added distinction of being UP's centennial president since the country's premier university would celebrate its 100th foundation in 2008.

Upon the eve of the voting, BOR members who were perceived to support Romulo reportedly got calls from ranking politicians to vote for Esguerra.

"Kapit na nga Malacañang's choice. There was really a strong intervention from Malacañang," student regent Mer-ce-Gemine delos Reyes said.

"Yes, can say that for the first time, UP opposed the President's candidate. We answered our democratic choice," he added.

The BOR members again cast their votes through secret ballot slips.

Luz Medrosong, the BOR's vice secretary, tallied the votes through seven ballot slips.

Esguerra and Romulo were each assigned at 6-6 votes after an unprecedented fourth balloting.

UP faced a return to the chaotic period of 1968-69 when it only backed off after to change because the BOR could not reach a consensus on who should be its president.

IN THE KNOW

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines was founded in 1908 by decree of the first Philippine Legislature.

The UP System consists of six constituent universities: Diliman, Manila, Visayas, Los Baños, Mindanao, and Baguio. It has 49 colleges.

It has a student enrollment of 38,334, as of the first semester of school year 2004-05.

It has about 4,500 faculty members and 8,000 non-teaching personnel.

Old friends

His vast experience as an old friend who voted for him as UP president in 1995 (Emil Javier was elected) and in 1999.

"But I cannot allow personal friendship and leaving me look (personal debt) to color my judgment of who is best for the University," Nemenzo said.

He said Romulo had not only demonstrated her leadership and management, she also had the support of the UP community.

In a thinly veiled pitch for Romulo, faculty regent Sergio Cao also said his fellow BOR members to follow the selection criteria.

"Let us choose someone whose academic experience and personal integrity will fit UP's highest principle," he said.

Informed sources said it was the Commission on Higher Education Chair and ex officio BOR Chair Fr. Rolando dela Rosa who switched his vote for Romulo.

A former rector of the University of Sto. Tomas, Dela Rosa was appointed CHED chair in September.

Aside from Nemenzo, Cao and Delos Reyes, three of the five Malacañang appointees, reportedly voted for Romulo. They are former Supreme Court Justice Abraham Sarmiento, Filomeno Sevilla and Perlita Ribal, who were in the Duterte-Halili ticket's congressional slate.

Sarmiento, Cao and Delos Reyes also joined the gathering.

Those who reportedly voted for Esguerra are ex officio BOR members Sen. Juan Flavier, chair of the Senate committee on education; Rep. Cynthia Villar, chair of the House committee on education; and alumni regent Cen. Jaime de los Santos.

Palace appointee Raffaniela Verona and Nelia Gonzales reportedly also supported Esguerra.

During the weekend, one of the 10 nominees—former CHED chair and UP official Emy Garcia—gave her support to Romulo.

Garcia told the BOR that she would vouch for Romulo's leadership, integrity and work ethic.

"I am confident that she will make a good universal president for the university," she said.

While some nominees launched media campaigns to back their candidacy, Romulo, sorry on, enjoyed the broadest support from the UP community.

Of the nominees, only four (in did not attend the forum and dialogues held on the UP campuses.

All the nominees were interviewed by the BOR.

Question of the Week

Congressmen promised to cut their pork barrel by 40 percent to help curb the fiscal crisis. What is your reaction to their latest decision to retain 100 percent of their pork?

Senders of a first (if such) published in Tuesday's InqBox *will each receive an "Inquirer T-shirt!"*

SPORTS

Don't miss your favorite TV shows! Check out Inky's Inquirer TV Guide in the Entertainment section

SOMMERTIME ... Jenny Shin of South Korea tees off on the 18th hole during the first round of the Ladies Professional Golf Association Championship at the Moon Valley Golf Club in Phoenix, Arizona, on Thursday. Shin finished the first round with a 3-under par 69 and is tied for 5th place. AFP PHOTO/Jeff Haynes

Jenny settles for 5th spot as Annika takes 8th title

MOST COMPLETE ACCESSORIES FOR A.M.E.

FedEx, Barako clash in Lucena

Ultron REV-X OIL FOR A Million
PETRON
TXT UR WAY TO CASH & GADGETS
Sikat kang driver ka sa Petron Ultron Rev-X Oil for a Million Texting Promo!
Bumili na ng Petron Ultron o Rev-X.
· I-scratch ang code · I-text · I-send
at manalo ng Ultron Touring at Rev-X Hauler, Samsung Cellphones, Digicams, DVD Players at Magic Sing weekly, P100,000 monthly at kung buenas,1 Million Pesos sa Grand Draw!

■ Season ban to cost Artest $5 million

■ Pacquiao distracted –Roach

UNFOCUSED: Pacquiao punches Mumpar in mid-fire bout AP, FILE

Roach warns Pacquiao over 'distractions'

By Sabrett L. Lagumbay, Contributor

WORLD KNOCKOUT trainer Freddie Roach arrived from Los Angeles yesterday and immediately took a motorcycle ride to Dasmariñas City along with Filipino Manny Pacquiao, who is gearing up for a crucial fight on Dec. 15 at the Fort in Taguig.

Roach is here to put a semblance of discipline into the training of the Filipino boxer before the fight's IBF No. 4 super bantamweight Edison Jil Battery of Thailand in a 12-round bout headlining the "Sinag sa Taguig" card.

The chief with Pulsan is seen as a tuneup for Pacquiao's title rematch with WBA (Super)-world-IBF champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico this February.

Roach, in an interview with this Sports at the airport, said Pacquiao—who is also being trained by Brahman "Bobby" Fernandez—should fall on steps in his preparations.

"This guy Diokno is fighting Manny Pacquiao, the most recognized featherweight in the world today so he's gonna come to relocated turf here to take care of him," said Roach.

He indicated his displeasure over reports that Pacquiao was shooting a reality TV show in the midst of training, saying up late playing pool and generally taking things easy.

"Too many distractions are not good for him (Pacquiao)," said Roach. "He's got to take care of his body and he's got to focus on this fight because it is leading up to the fight against Marquez...the biggest fight of his life (pause) so, I'm going to have to sit him down and get his head in the right place."

Roach was also worried about the inadequate training facilities at the Alexandrea Gym in Dasmariñas where Pacquiao trains. He wants his ward to train at the top-class facilities at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

The boxer-coached trainer also pointed out the lack of good sparring partners after Philippine lightweight champion Fernando Montiela got injured.

"I'll get a hold of him and we'll be back in Manila in June," said Roach. "We need good training facilities."

Knights look to Enrile in clash with Archers

THE COLLEGIATE-BASED teams have been struggling in the PBL Open Championship. And some varsity stars, like Letoya's Bonjay Estrella, are performing way off their usual pace.

Coach Lonie Alas, however, remains confident in his bunches' ground when Toyota Otis Letoya dashes with the defending ICT 16 La Salle at the end of the first round at 4 p.m. today at the Pasig Sports Center.

"He's still struggling, now but I know the guy well," said Alas of Estrella, who came into the match averaging a puny 0.7 points a game.

"Right now we're just going [to] feed [estrella] to stop. I have strong faith in him and I believe that he'll still one of the finest players in the league."

But the emotional rumor is: losing story of Mac Cardoza, who led the team to the ICTM La Salle after serving a one-game suspension.

STANDINGS	W	L
[illegible]	1	1
Mindoro	1	1
Wilcon	1	1
Angeles U	1	1
Air Force	1	4
Tarlac Univ	1	4
CEU-Laguna	2	4
ADU Univ	1	4

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Magnolia-FEU
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis-ICT
6 p.m.—CEU-Laguna Sports Univ.-Letoya

"We will try every thing to stop Cardoza and (Joseph) 'Yeo,' said Alas.

Rachel, Magnolia-FEU will aim for a second straight win against the struggling Air Philippines at 2 p.m.

Victory for lowly Mindoro dashes for the first time in playing varsity.

ICTM La Salle, the DAAP champion, has been losing badly dropping its last three games by an average margin of 24 points.

Toyota Otis Letoya is coming off back-to-back setbacks to Adelaide Mobile shoes and Country Goose.

Defending champion Magnolia (0-1) went into a three-game slide before recovering with an 85-59 rout of the Archers, who played without Cardoza. Asanta 16 Ryan Alejandro and Justin Tumbaoang, defends the high school crown while Arroyo aims for a repeat in the collegiate category.

The grade school roster is led by reigning Junior World champion JS Guanzon of Holy Family Recoleto, Ateneo's Enzo dump Manuel Payot and Hong Kong-born Mike Hosking Sons of Enrile.

Preceding the 7:30 a.m. tee-off is the hitting of ceremonial drives by former President Fidel V. Ramos, Philippine Sports Commission chairman Jolly Gomez, Philippine Sports Commission chief Eric Buhain, Samsung Phils. CEO and president Hong Wal Kim, Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines Inc. president Oga Mumar and Sea Hawk Chairman of the organizing Professional Sports Management Group.

Banking the 18-hole tourney held in swardsward is ninth the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines are Tokyo Tokyo, Copperstone Sport, Gatorade and Bright-E. Effici-Bee, Jam 88.3, Phnix 89.1, Magic 80.9, 93.5 RT and 1163 K-Lite are media partners.

Hitting shortly is after set to open up the tourney with the multi-talented legend family—Crystal Beth (Las Piñas High), Bridee (Golden Acres) and Princess (Golden Acres)—and the Arnolfo bro—Jose Miguel, Mark Anthony, Abegail and Michael—in the cast.

MARVIN Ortigueira of Makati grabs the rebound off Ray Mondoza of Ateneo Mobile during their game Saturday The Palestinian wins, 86-81.

Peping gets top POC post Friday

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FORMER Tarlac congressman Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. will take over as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee by midnight today when the local Olympic body holds its election Friday.

Cojuangco, the incumbent president, will succeed Celso Guerry of Boxing, who opted not to seek a third term.

But under the POC constitution, the incoming president will serve his four-year term only from Jan. 1 next year.

Cojuangco was appointed vice chief of the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee two months ago in anticipation of the greatest role he would play in next year's Southeast Asian Games.

Meanwhile, the POC nominations committee, headed by former president Robin Ortiz, has come up with the list of candidates running four-year terms in the POC polls.

Running unopposed like Cojuangco are ambassador Roberto Invencagada for chief; weightlifting's Jose Ribaya Panlilio for vice chief; ex-gov. pembo, judo's Joey Joaquin for secretary; and women's Julian Gonzales for treasurer.

Cojuangco's bet for auditor, Maria Rosa Henares of squad taekwondo, however, will have an opposition in former swimmer Tom Carrascoso, the chief of mission for the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake.

Jenny settles . . .

(From page B1)

wound up with a double bogey.

Chris Bell was in the worst formation only needed to hit the green. Instead, she pulled it left and hit a spectator, keeping the welcome in double for a while longer. Seventeen stepped down to 12 feet above the hole, and when Bell topped in for double bogey she finished with bache even par to win.

"I did all I could do, and I was the best with a tough date on the plate," said Kerr who closed out with a 69 to be named medalist.

He ended another sponsorship year for honorariums—eight minutes and pace over $2.5 million.

Both players finished at 11-under 205.

Stella Pfeifle and Carin Koch each shot 69 and finished third at 206.

Grace Park finished at 209 and won the Nine Trophy for having the lowest season-scoring average. AP

Bancod rules Misamis chess

OROQUIETA CITY—MISAMIS is the only ranked master for both international Master Jayson Bancod and agreed to a quick 35-move draw with top-seed Allene Ed Arthur Dionio in the final round of the 1st Misamis Occidental Open chess championship here.

Bancod, the 11-year-old runner-up of the Philippine team to the 2006 Istanbul Chess Olympiad, won with a final score of 8.5 points in nine games to clinch the top prize of P50,000.

National Master Abel Mike Antonio of Cagayan de Oro, International Master Oliver Barbosa of Misamis City on finish with 8.0 points for second place worth P15,000.

Master Orlando Ilio, Cebu, International Expert of Bigan City and NM Edmund Antonio—of Pagadian—shared the fourth slot finished 7.5 points. They received P5,000 each.

Lemuel Hael Salgado and Rebelina Salcedo III finished 1-2 in the kiddie division. Mother Bernadette Cenit Ibañez

3rd Samsung schools golf tees off at Valley

TOP juggllers and college standouts shoot it out for top honors in three divisions in the final edition of the Samsung Hi-Q golf championships Meetup off today at the executive course of the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo.

A record field of 116 players is lensed by world, Asian and national champions from 30 schools are competing for the collegiate, high school and elementary division titles in the a three-day competition.

La Salle Zobel, headed by Mike Arroyo and Alvaro Ambrosio, defends the high school crown while Ateneo aims for a repeat in the collegiate category.

The grade school roster is led by reigning Junior World champion JS Guanzon of Holy Family Recoleto, Ateneo's Enzo dump Manuel Payot and Hong Kong-born Mike Hosking Sons of Enrile.

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greenwich

MIRIAM, CSA MAINTAIN CLEAN SLATE

SEE

ZSAZA ECARMA (...Group A leader Colegio San Agustin dealt JCIs Greenhills its first loss in 3 minutes tournament sets 25-20, 25-23, 25-18. Mirriam moved a 16-0-0-0 beating JC Lady and Cardinal to lead Group B with a 7-0 card. Hope Christian walloped DBM Lac Pilots 25-7, 25-7, final conference. Meanwhile, Wesleyan (L-R: Francis Bernard 25-5, 25-18 and JC Thad's Pang 25-16, 25-14. Other winners were downgrades, Olympic, Mirriam Preparatory, JC Francis of Assisi Ateneo and Colegio San Juan.

"We're now seeing that GVIT will be a very good breeding ground for future national players. Having established the standards of the players, GVIT will be having different divisions with a bigger high school base and may even extend it to the grade school level" said Project Chairman Tanny Gonzales.

TEAM STANDINGS

GVIT

MIKASA

15 still perfect as Bakbakan derby resumes

THIRTY matches are on stage starting at 2 p.m. today as the Bakbakan 2008 4-Stag Derby enters its penultimate date at the Araneta Coliseum.

Fifteen stags remained undefeated with 5 points each after the four-day semifinal fight schedule of the derby hosted by the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders and presented by Hizon's Laboratories.

The fifteen unbeaten 4.51 points against, 7-1 with 1 early, 24 with 3.5 points and 105 with 5.

Among those rating undefeated duties were the Cagayan Valley Gamefowl Breeders Association entry Brg. Boy III of Jerry Aldeta, Mindanao CBMs Jun Magno of Bulacy de los Santos, BCP Pandacaqui of Rodrigo Cruz, Jr., Pride of Bay Chandler Bautista, Soldiers Blade of Jun Tito Cuizon, GBMs ABC Jude Renan Dupuyo Raja 1 of Jimy Lapid and Municipal Top Gun JAC II of Former Brg. Laguna mayor Edwin Ramirez.

Also heavily favored for perusal are the defending champion United Breeders of Cavite Capricorn Jeff of concession president and Mayor Jose Nakpil; Gamefowl Breeders Association of Nueva Ecija Bilis of Jose Laurence, Negros GBMs BSC Cesare Black of Laurente de la Torre, Mount Limestone Cooper Guidelines of Cir Ronald Salgado, WBF Buffy of Oscar Lim and Aquaguard GFC Complement 3000 T of Purcell Antonino. Bacay GBMs will rely on Lucky 88 I of Gerardito Go and Dido de los Cruz, and MBDA Arkan of Elmer Bayon.

The 143-fight championship program starting at 10 a.m. this Thursday will feature 30 matches.

Wrestling Open under way

SEE SPORTS IN BRIEF

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

WatchGuard Firebox X

Movie, music sectors lost ₱9.8B to piracy

By Abigail L. Ho

BEFORE buying your favorite movie titles on DVD format from the still very active sidewalk retailers in Quiapo, think of the ₱9.8 billion that the entertainment industry lost this year and the hundreds of people who are now jobless because of piracy.

Data from the Optical Media Board (OMB) showed that the local movie video and music industries have lost to the tune of ₱9.8 billion in 2004 as pirated copies of pre-released movies and albums continued to proliferate not just in the streets of Manila but in the provinces as well.

The movie industry, which was projected to earn ₱7 billion this year, registered revenues of only ₱3 billion as movie-buffs preferred to go for pirated VCD and DVD copies of movies even before these hit the theaters.

Cinema exhibitors group secretary general Eduardo Tarrosa said in a briefing yesterday that piracy did not only result in revenue losses for the movie industry but also in a massive downsizing of the industry.

From 1,200 theaters in 1997, he said the number had fallen to only 870 as admissions dramatically declined. The industry had to implement huge severance in advance pays just to stay afloat, while those further discouraged movie buffs from going to the theaters to watch the latest flicks.

The video distribution industry likewise suffered losses amounting to ₱4.9 billion due to piracy from a 2004 projection of ₱6.3 billion, earnings on the local front projected to only ₱1.4 billion.

The music industry also continued to suffer a blow from piracy, with revenues coming up to only ₱1.3 billion from a projected ₱3.3 billion for the year.

Local music producers and artists were hardest hit by the huge piracy rate, said composer and singer Ryan Cayabyab, as the P50,000 to P60,000 spent to record just one song could no longer be recovered as now almost everybody can easily produce a CD burned from a master copy.

Cayabyab, who is also the chairman of Music Creators of the Philippines (Mcap), a group composed of composers, lyricists and publishers, said the music industry was losing as much as ₱1 billion annually to piracy.

Mcap executive director Vicky Morales said the advent of advanced technology is just to blame for the ease of illegal reproduction of copyrighted materials.

"Before, you have to have the master tape and the equipment to produce a pirated copy. Now, you only need a computer and a CD burner," she said.

Morales said Mcap has been working closely with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to help in the campaign against piracy.

"We have been conducting seminars for the PNP and NBI to help them identify pirated copies from the original versions," she said.

Tarrosa said the drastic decline of legitimate movie houses hit the streets of Manila and various provinces even before the original premiere dates of the movies.

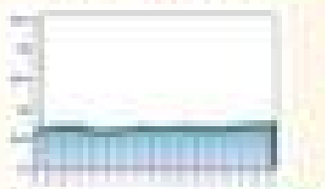
OMB chair Ma. Victoria Mendoza said the advent of advanced technology is just to blame for the availability of affordable CD burners, but she also blamed piracy activities here and abroad.

While the Philippines remained among the most optical media pirate-infested countries in Asia and the Pacific, with a

(Story on A2)

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱56.207 to $1

As of 5 p.m., Nov. 22, 2004

₱55.18 to €1

As of 5 p.m., Nov. 22, 2004

SOLD: $ ₱55.30-55.57

as of 4:30 p.m. Hong Kong Nov. 23, 2004

STOCK MARKET

	Code			
United States	Dow	10,553.06	1	10,553
Japan	Nikkei	11,160.68	1.00%	11,048
United Kingdom	Footsie	4,466.90	1.00%	4,422
Singapore	Straits	1,880.51	0.0000%	1,880
Netherlands	Amex	1,440.94	0.0000%	1,441
Canada	TSE	8,133.64	0.0000%	8,134
Singapore	Straits	1,880.51	0.0000%	1,881
Australia	Sydney	3,625.00	0.0000%	3,625
Bahrain	Bahrain	1,558.81	0.0000%	1,559
Netherlands	Amex	1,440.94	0.0000%	1,441
Kuwait	Kuwait	6,904.51	0.0000%	6,905
Indonesia	Jakarta	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Thailand	Bangkok	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Chile	Chile	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Peru	Peru	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Brazil	Brazil	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Finland	Finland	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Italy	Italy	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Malaysia	Malaysia	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Mexico	Mexico	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
New Zealand	New Zealand	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Norway	Norway	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Philippines	Philippines	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
South Africa	South Africa	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Spain	Spain	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Sweden	Sweden	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Switzerland	Switzerland	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Taiwan	Taiwan	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Turkey	Turkey	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000
Venezuela	Venezuela	1,000.00	0.0000%	1,000

Stocks end lower on oil price woes

(See stock numbers report on Page B3)

91-day treasury bill rate rises to 7.878%

By Michelle F. Nanco

stocks with cash, banks scrambled for recently-risk-free government securities yesterday, resulting in a sharp increase in the rate of the 91-day treasury bills and forcing a decline in the 182- and 364-day yields.

The rate for the 91-day T-bills, used by banks as a benchmark in pricing their loans, stood at 7.878 percent, up 1.37 basis points.

The six-month rate slide by 11.6 basis points to 8.026 percent, while the yield of the one-year debt instrument dropped by 7.4 basis points to 8.720 percent. One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.

According to Deputy Treasurer Edmundo Mendiola, banks started pushing their funds in government securities because the revenue of Treasury would be offering its last auctions for the year two weeks from now.

"We only have one more T-bill auction this year. Their (banks') have too much liquidity and are probably getting as much as they can in supply (securities)," he said in a briefing after the auction.

Apparently for the short-term debt instruments was strong, as shown by over-subscription for all maturities. Tenders for the three-month debt paper reached ₱6.04 billion, compared with the government's offering of only ₱4.5 billion.

For the six-month and one-year debt notes, the market subscribed ₱4.17 billion and ₱4.55 billion worth of bids, respectively. The amounts of bids were much higher than the government's offering of only ₱2.5 and ₱3 billion for each tenor.

The Treasury's auction committee accepted all its scheduled borrowing for each maturity.

Mendiola said that with the banks' high level of liquidity, interest rates on long-term government securities that would be auctioned before the end of the year were also expected to soften.

"We expect to get a good price, lower rates," he said. Mendiola added that negative news such as the possible downgrading of the country's credit rating would not affect domestic interest rates very much because these have been lowered by the market to previous numbers.

The hottest stock in town

THIS article was written in conjunction with the Research Department who saw it out as an internal memo. However, additional information for here included and some figures have been brought up to date to the light of new information.

FILIPINO HOLDING CORP.

Secondary Public Offering to shareholders of Integrated Services Holdings Ltd. (ASCHOL), in exchange for their company.

Business: Holding company which wholly owns Advanced Contact Solutions, a firm primarily engaged in call center and BPO services.

Offer size: Up to 70 million common shares of PHI, representing 11.7 percent of the firm's total outstanding shares.

Offer price: P3.95

Issue amount: P266 million to P294 million

Projected 2005 NIAT: P205 million

EPS: P0.417

P/E ratio: 9.48x

Post-offer ownership structure:

AACSPR - 31.33%

Public - 18.67%

Total - 70 million to 100 million shares

Timetable of offering:

Start of offer: Nov. 16, 2004

Close of offer: Nov. 17, 2004

Expected coming date: Nov. 22, 2004

Catching a bit of sunshine

IT HAS been a while since we have felt even the slightest tingling of excitement for a stock offering. In our view investors should refrain to consider buying shares of PH because ACS, the main operating subsidiary, is poised to take the growth of the call center industry over the next few years.

From 20,000 operation seats at the end of 2003, the sector is on track to meet the projected growth rate of 100 percent this year to 40,000. And by 2010, the industry is expected to increase 10 percent more to 60,000.

ACS, for its part, has more than doubled its number of seats to 1,000 to respond from only 700 seats at the end of last year. But in

Mr. Bearbull

Bear Sailboat

cases, as a result, is expected to reach P130 million this year, up 2,500 percent year-on-year. For 2005, management is projecting a conservative increase in the number of operating seats to 2,000, notwithstanding profits that are still expected to double to P270 and then triple to a number of seats.

Issues

THE BIGGEST concern for investors is the stock's liquidity. The maximum potential market float is only 11.9 million shares, which may be too small for institutional investors. However, if the company plans to do a right offer next year and the float would improve the float.

In addition, industry contracts are usually short-term in nature so there are no assurances that any of the telcos or agents leave the institutional of losing quite volatile. However, we believe the odds of government action are low since ACS' services quality ranks high, relative to the other service providers of its clients.

The quality of the labor pool has also become an issue, especially in projecting the sustainability of the industry's growth. A "call core" number of accepted applicants/call applicants for call center agents is often used to measure the quality of this labor pool.

In Bangalore, India, which employs around 234,000 agents, the hit rate is 6 percent. For the part of ACS, data hit rate is 15-20 percent. This may be high but it does not mean that the quality of the agents are poor. Instead of advertising, ACS and up with various interviewers with regards to their history of previous agents, thereby assuring them of high quality of applicants. They also fit the applicants with different suites, which correspond to their strengths.

Upside

HAVBAE a 2005 PER of around 6.6x, PH would be a bargain for a significant discount to other listed call center operators (AS fetches 15x, Indian counterparts at 25x). People Support Inc. (PSPI), which was recently listed in the Manila, is trading at 19.8x 2005 earnings.

As mentioned earlier, the bottom for 2005 projected earnings is P205 million. Given the real conditions being painted, this upside seems advantage to happy. With its current complete, ACS can easily ramp up to 2,000 seats) next year if the need arises.

With the lot, if any additional capital requirement or overhead requirement, net income can reach P310 million, 27 percent more than its baseline projection.

At this level, earnings per share would be P0.526 and the P3.95 offering price would still be a bargain at 7.5x.

For 2006, we are projecting 800 additional seats and looking at earnings of between P410-P468 million, and EPS of P0.68 to P0.78. This would indicate a PER of as low as 5.1x and 4 year compound annual growth rate of as high as 40 percent.

ACS is also studying other avenues for growth including the possibility of expanding its business process outsourcing services and maybe even acquiring a foreign-based call center operator.

In summary, we believe the company's potential to outweigh the risks mentioned above and it is the only play on the fast growing call center industry.

Advise now to the secondary public offering of PH. Our 12 month target is P6, pegged at the projected PER of the market in 2005. This represents a substantial discount to ACS' counterparts in India and the US, and it is still pending their that in the other companies.

If you were willing to look ahead to 2006, then a PER of 11 (still 'cue) would indicate a price of up to P7.26, or to equivalent allowing for the right issue.

SMC to submit 'conditional' bid for 40% stake in Del Monte

By Dorie C. Dorobo

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. will submit a "conditional" offer to acquire a 40-percent stake in Del Monte Pacific Ltd. after allegedly uncovering about P60 million in bank loans allegedly carried by the listed product to the Philippine government.

A well-placed source from SMC told the Inquirer that the late-hour board meet, after conducting its due diligence on DMPL, saw that there were unrecorded loans over almost a six-year period.

"So, we'll make it clear that our offer was conditional, subject to the settlement of bank loans and such functions from the Philippine government," the source said.

The SMC source said that upon the company's scrutiny of DMPL books, the bank purchase committed early 04. percent of earnings for several years against the 25-percent requirement.

The source said SMC officials were surprised upon discovering the bank loans, especially considering that DMPL was listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange.

But initially, the source said SMC is not pursuing its bid for DMPL, without disclosing how much it would offer.

The stake is estimated to be worth about $175 million based on listed share prices as of the month.

The source said the deadline for the submission of bids would be within this week.

It was also explained that a major European bank would be decisive in bidding for the 40-percent stake in the fruit products held by Italian firm Gio-Hontiveros SpA.

"The shares of the Italian company in Del Monte were foreclosed by that bank," the source said.

Aside from SMC, other bidders for the stake were Investcorp Corp. of Japan, H.J. Heinz Co. and Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc. The Investcorp bought of The Blackstone group, the second biggest stockholders in DMPC with a 21 percent stake, has the option to match the best offer.

DMPL owns the brand rights for Del Monte products in the Philippines and in the Indonesian consumer. The company announced an 18-percent increase in its third-quarter turnover this year to P3.1 million from a year ago while net profit rose by 34 percent to $4.5 million.

Aboitiz group scouting for other power projects

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING firm Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV) is considering P900 million for possible investments in power projects, an official of the group said said.

AEV vice president Lim Miguel Aboitiz yesterday declined to name the proposed power projects but said the proceeds raised from a preferred share offering "will not necessarily" fund a planned bid for the 600-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Masinloc, Zambales.

Aboitiz said the funds would increase its decision whether to bid for the government's Masinloc plant by Dec. 20, the bidding date.

Aboitiz said it was also possible that the Aboitiz group would no longer bid for the plant due to concerns about the plant's existing contracts.

AEV, the holding company of the Aboitiz family, will issue P1.5 billion worth of preferred shares next month to retire a maturing debt. AEV executive vice president and chief operating officer Erramon Aboitiz Jackson.

AEV will offer 15.9 million non-voting, non-participating, non-convertible, redeemable and redeemable preferred shares at an offer price of P10 each.

The preferred shares will be issued in two series. Series A, which has a floating dividend rate, and Series B with a fixed dividend rate.

Proceeds of the proposed issues following will be used to finance its various power projects as well as that of its subsidiaries and affiliates. The offer period will start on Dec. 1.

The Aboitiz group is looking at buying some hydroelectric power plants held by National Power Corp. in Benguet province and Bukidnon should it decide not to bid for the government's 600-megawatt coal-fired Masinloc power plant.

The Aboitiz family has interests in transportation, power generation and distribution, banking and food.

Ann Van Gogh
CLUB of MAKATI, INC.
connie ang

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Movie, music . . .

(From page B1)

piracy rate of 89 percent in 2003 based on data from the Motion Picture Association. Musicians said the CDMO's efforts in conducting special media piracy had already produced some very concrete results within its first quarter of operation.

An estimated legitimate pieces, the CDMO had confiscated more than P224 million worth of goods in the July-September period.

Musicians said it would take a while before the country could get rid of the list of the organized piracy groups. It would also take a long time for

the Philippines to be delisted from the United States' Special 301 Priority Watch List of intellectual property rights violators.

"It's a tall order, but we must ourselves to at least be downlisted," he said. "We're making a clear note. Maybe in time we'll be 406 to make changes done."

The Philippines' 89-percent piracy rate in 2003 was the fourth highest among 13 countries in Asia and the Pacific. Top piracy havens include Vietnam at a rate of 100 percent, China and Malaysia at 90 percent, and Indonesia at 92 percent.

Stocks end lower . . .

(From page B1)

points, or 0.41 percent, to 1,798.28, trimming its gain for the year to 24 percent.

Traders said the index was able to 1,798 before bargain hunters emerge.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which accounted for 37 percent of total turnover, fell P25, or 1.81 percent, to P1,355.

Bank of the Philippine Islands, the country's oldest and second-largest lender, lost P1, or 2.04 percent, to P48.

Bourse

Stocks end lower . . .

(From page B1)

numbers," said Jaime del Castillo, managing director of investment firm First Grade Holdings.

Del Castillo said a rise in world crude oil prices also dampened sentiments. The Philippines imports most of its oil requirements, and the cost of crude has pushed up inflation, raising expectations the central bank will raise interest rates.

The main index slipped 7.39

DISCLOSURES

[TEL] Makiaja Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 16 at 3:30 p.m. at 2F-9 Laguna Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

ACTIVE Alliance Inc. announced SEC and Co. as its auditor for audited for 2006-2008.

ACTIVE Alliance Inc. elected Lucinda Le Chuan Shee (chair and president), Guidenbo Salvador Jr. (treasurer), Renato Reyes (SVP and comptroller), Cesar Antoni Salcedo (VP for marketing), Cristobal Bosa (corporate secretary), Alexis Tangcoa and Tirso Tantiuday as its board of directors. Gerardo Bosa was elected VP for finance.

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank (BDO) requested and was granted a trade mark on its name on Nov. 22 in connection with the securities offer to international investors by BDO capital Security Corp., BDO Bank by Development Corp., and other BDO shareholders of up to P11B will list BDO shares. The trade will a 60 to 65bd on Nov. 22.

FINSER Pacific Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Dec. 16 at 9 a.m. at the Makati Sports Club, Makati City. included in the agenda are the appointment of its external auditor and the election of board of directors for the ensuing year. *Complied by D.C. Yap, PSE Research*

Trading stopped as BDO reckons share pricing

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange yesterday halted the trading of Banco de Oro Universal Bank's shares pending the pricing of up to 175 million shares earmarked for ownership offering.

In a circular, the PSE said the single-day trading halt was implemented yesterday upon request of the BDO unit, as the pricing of the shares was still being completed.

BDO said the trading halt would be for the interest rate production of BDO shareholders "to advance orderly conducting and avoid any undue price distortion."

The secondary offer to International investors was made by SM Investments Corp., Multi-Realty Development Corp. and other shareholders under the SM group of mall magnate Henry Sy.

To free up more shares for foreign investors and boost the liquidity of BDO shares, the bank established a domestic holding company that was 60 percent owned by the SM group through SM Investments Corp., and 40 percent by existing minority foreign investor Cambridge Pacific Pearl Ltd.

The transfer of the BDO shares held by foreign fund Cambridge into the holding company reduces foreign direct shareholdings in BDO from 32 percent to 10 percent.

After the offering, the SM group will continue to retain a significant majority shareholdings in BDO, and BDO will continue to be an integral part of the SM group.

BDO has appointed Macquarie Securities as the sole lead manager, global coordinator and bookrunner for the offering.

Earlier, Standard & Poor's that large investors aimed to hang tough counter-party debt rating on BDO to "B+" from "B" in the meantime, it affirmed the short-term credit rating of "B" on BDO.

Following to acquisition of the local unit of Spanish bank Banco Santander Central Hispano SA, BDO has become the seventh-largest domestic commercial bank in the Philippines, S&P said.

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DA raises rice buying rate by ₱1

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE NATIONAL Food Authority Council has approved the ₱1 per kilogram increase in the buying price of palay for the main cropping season that annually begins on the fourth quarter.

According to Arthur Yap, Department of Agriculture secretary and NFAC chair, the increase in the government's support price for palay (unmilled rice) will raise the income of some 2 million farmers.

"Our rice subsidy increase will actually raise the income of farmers by 20 to 40 percent based on current production costs that have been verified in the field," Yap said yesterday.

The wet season crop, which is harvested in the fourth quarter, accounts for around 60 percent of the country's rice output.

The move to raise the government's buying rate is based on the recommendation of the Interagency Committee on Rice and Corn. Committee members said they are hopeful last month demanded a raise in the government's support price.

From a level of around ₱7 per kilogram, production costs have risen to around ₱7.30 to ₱7.40 for a kilogram of rice due mainly to the increase in the price of fertilizer, according to the National Food Authority.

Since 2003, the Department of Agriculture has been promoting the use of hybrid and inbred seeds, which generate a much higher yield of around 6 to 8 tons/hectare as against the yield of ordinary seeds, which is only about 1.5 to 2 tons/hectare.

However, an NFA official said that increasing the support price for palay could pose disadvantages to local farmers given the government's tight fiscal situation, that the likelihood of a final procurement budget.

A tight procurement budget would mean lower procurement volume. This would, in turn, tie the hands of the NFA, which might not be able to boost prices in certain areas.

"We have seen in the past that when we're not buying in the local market, traders are able to push down prices locally," the official said.

For 2004, the NFA was given a ₱4-billion procurement budget to ensure farm gate prices to profitable levels.

Philippine milk production up 20 percent

THE NATIONAL Dairy Authority yesterday reported that the country's local milk production has increased by 20 percent to 9.28 million liters in the first nine months of this year.

This is higher than the 4.59 million liters posted in the same period last year, according to NDA Administrator Salvador Bulatao.

Bulatao said the growth showed the local milk industry's strength amid the financial slump being experienced in the country. In comparison, total agricultural growth during the period stood at 4.02 percent, with fisheries subsector ranking up by 4.6 percent.

"The 9.28 million liters of milk was produced by 3,480 cows managed by nearly 6,000 farmers in NDA-assisted production areas around the country," Bulatao said.

She said three new dairy zones were opened in Zamboanga del Norte, Iloilo and Negros Occidental from the proceeds of the sale of 66 percent of the 2,000 metric tons of dry milk donated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The funds raised enabled the NDA to place some 494 imported cows to the new dairy zones subsequently, Bulatao said.

The 2,000 donated milk will be distributed to 16,965 of the 46,251 children beneficiaries of the NDA milk feeding program. To cover all beneficiaries, the program needs more than one billion liters of milk worth P46.21 million.

As of September, the NDA has trained 1,421 farmers in farm dairy husbandry management and bookkeeping, according to Bulatao.

Christine Gaylican

BOI-proposed incentives bill seen to jack up gov't losses

By Michelle V Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has expressed fear that the fiscal incentives rationalization bill drafted by the Board of Investments might only increase the government's revenue losses, instead of minimizing them.

A finance official said that the BOI's proposed 30-percent withholding outside investment incentives, and non-overlooking zero-rate.

He said the DOF believed the proposed bill deviated from the objective of rationalizing the investment incentives package, which was to minimize losses arising from these fiscal perks and help the government raise additional revenue.

The new incentives for preferred projects that were included in the BOI in the proposed bill were the disbursement of the imposition of the 3-percent minimum corporate income tax, exemption from local taxes and licenses, duty and tax deduction for training and expenses, and double deduction for research and development.

Under BOI-registered firms enjoying income tax holidays pay a minimum income tax of 3 percent. But with the BOI's proposed 100, even the 3-percent income tax will be unapplicable to the IT's period.

The double deduction for training, expenses, and research and development income does for every P1 spent for such activities, a business covered by the incentive can deduct P2 from its taxable income.

The bill proposed by the BOI seeks the scrapping of some of the incentives presently accorded to preferred investment projects. These included tax credits for taxes and duties on raw materials, the exemption from taxes and duties of imported spare parts and supplies, and tax and duty exemption of breeding stocks and genetic materials.

The BOI believes that with the rationalization of these fiscal incentives, the governments would be able to save P43 billion a year.

But the finance officials interviewed that the supposed savings from the withdrawal of these incentives would only be wiped out with the new perks introduced in the proposed bill.

"The cost to the government of the new incentives might even be higher than the savings arising from the withdrawal of the old ones," he said.

The BOI's 100 newly BOI-registered firms. It will form part of the three bills that the Arroyo administration will push for Congressional approval in line with its efforts to rationalize the incentives system.

The other two bills were drafted by the Department of Finance, and were focused on the reduction of the list of products and services that were enjoying exemption from value-added tax, and on the removal of incentives that were granted by special laws.

The rationalization of fiscal incentives was one of the eight proposed revenue-enhancement measures which were aimed at helping the Arroyo administration widen its fiscal problem, which is characterized by a gaping budget deficit and a ballooning debt.

Last year, alone, the government lost the opportunity to collect P340 billion in revenues due the fiscal incentives granted to preferred investment projects.

The other seven measures are the simplified two income tax, performance-based carried services for overseas-collecting agencies, increase in value-added tax rate, increase in petroleum taxes, increase in excise tax on tax products, franchise tax on telecommunication companies, and tax amnesty.

Together, these measures are expected to generate P80 billion in additional revenue for the government.

RP, Nepal sign air rights deal

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PHILIPPINES has forged its first air services agreement with Nepal following bilateral negotiations held in Kathmandu on May 17 and 18.

The agreement allows a Philippine airline to fly to Kathmandu daily.

Civil Aeronautics Board vice-chairman Jeremias Montemayor said the Nepalese government specifically gave the Philippines a weekly entitlement of 2,100 seats for passenger flights and 200 tons for cargo.

Montemayor said Nepal also granted the Philippines unlimited fifth freedom right, allowing the local carrier to pass through and pick up passengers in Bangkok on the way to Kathmandu.

Nepal, a small country in South Asia, is situated between India and China.

The Philippines had asked Nepal for a weekly entitlement of 4,000 seats and 168 tons for cargo. Montemayor said they were the maximum that the country's can panel had wanted.

"We were assured by the Nepalese government that we would enjoy equal treatment to improve the air agreement, including the fifth freedom provision," said the CAB head.

He said the fifth freedom provision given by Nepal was "historical" as it marked an "agreement on relationship with Thailand."

Montemayor said the country's air panel wanted to hold air rights negotiations with India early next year.

The talks with Nepal would be this year's last for the Philippine air panel. For 2005, the Department of Transportation and Communications had lined up talks with 11 countries, including the United States.

Montemayor said that the government had scratched a scheduled talks with Myanmar, India and Turkmenistan in the first quarter of 2005.

Gov't urged to drop plans to put up coal-fired plants in Panay

By Abigail L. Ho

GIVING, groups in Iloilo are pushing for the shelving of plans to put up coal-fired power plants in the area.

They, at the same time, urged the government to go for more environment-friendly and sustainable ways of producing power for the province.

Ami, Iloilo Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said any plan to put up coal-fired power plants should be debated and the stakeholders in the province had been consulted on how not to develop power sources there.

"While we are open as an archdiocese to alternative sources of energy, we believe that this is more friendly to the environment and less hazardous to human health," he said in a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo dated Nov. 8.

He said the government should ensure "serious efforts" in developing renewable energy resources, particularly in keeping with the Department of Energy's Renewable Energy Policy Framework.

Under the framework and pursuant to provisions of Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, there should be preferential bias for environment-friendly and renewable energy technologies and projects.

A multi-sectoral approach to power planning and development will also be pursued in the whole of Panay.

Various groups, including the Worldwide Fund for Nature-Philippines, the University of the Philippines National Engineering Center, and the Responsible Energies for Sustainable Energy (Rise) will start on Nov. 26-27 a six-month consultation process to produce a Power Development Plan for the island of Panay.

The series of consultations will be done to ensure that any new plan to put up a power plant in the area will not be thrusted down over after much planning, like what had happened in the 200 megawatt (MW) coal-fired power plant that Aboitiz Electric Power Corp. aspired to put up early this year.

The Iloilo Provincial Board opposed the construction of the $350 million power plant because of its possible negative repercussions on the environment.

The 12-strong Bise also opposed the power project because, according to Central Philippine University vice president and Nature Foundation Aurora Lim, the plant would have adverse effects on northern Iloilo's fishing grounds.

NEW gear for the new year /C2

LIFESTYLE

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Exercising with an injury

WELL AND GOOD

Erica Javier

NO MATTER how carefully you exercise or how solely you perform the maintenance of your sport, there is always the possibility of injury. All it takes is a few moments of inattention to what you are doing.

This is true for everyday activities, too. People have hurt their knees or pulled an outer thigh muscle getting out of the car the wrong way. Your can sprain your ankle by stepping over a child's toy or tripping into a pothole at a parking lot.

Sometimes, it isn't even your fault as when a 200-pound man drops on your foot as he tries to inch his way to an empty seat in a movie house.

Serious exercisers often ignore practicing they have to stop exercising until it hurts so much they have no choice but to stop. Some women go even should because they are afraid of the weight gain that follows when they stop exercising regularly. Less committed exercisers stop altogether.

Yet, in many cases, one can continue exercising in spite of an injury by making some adjustments and sacrifices.

Get correct medical advice

Whether you know an acute injury that happened suddenly and accidentally or a chronic injury that developed over time, it is wise to see a specialist in sports medicine, orthopedist or physical therapy. The specialist may prescribe pain killers and anti-inflammatory medications, special rehabilitation exercises, orthotic devices (example, arch or heel support), or simply exercise modifications.

Exercise around an injury

Basically, you want to protect the injured part as you exercise. Ample support is built in to safely strengthening and stretching the injured area until it has fully recovered. Don't strain the injured part before it is ready and don't rush the process. It will just delay your getting back to normal.

Here are some basic guidelines if you already have an existing acute or chronic injury (always get your doctor's approval first). If you have just started feeling some aches and pains, the guidelines can be part of an early preventive program so you don't develop a chronic injury.

Lighten the load

Reducing the amount of weight you carry may help you do your gym workouts, exercises without pain. If your knees hurt during step aerobics, try lowering the height of your bench to lessen the load on your knees.

Slow down

Slowing your exercise speed lessens stress on the injured part. For example, instead of doing advance high-low impact aerobics, do the beginner's routine where music is slower. Instead of very brisk walking on the treadmill, ramble temporarily for a slower walking speed.

Reduce impact

Find full-time joints can have time to heal by reducing the exercise impact. Switch from running to walking or from high impact to low impact aerobics.

Change exercise angle

Often, you can avoid pain in the shoulder joint by changing the angle of your chest exercises. Try using an incline bench instead of a flat bench or the other way around.

Change from free weights to machine or vice-versa

In some cases, changing from a free weight (barbell or dumbbell) bench press to a vertical chest machine makes the difference between pain and no pain. Sometimes the reverse relief when they switch from a fixed-path machine to unbridled one-arm row.

Change exercise

For pain of a chronic, changing your biceps or triceps exercises can do wonders. Try more advanced moves parallel to the involved muscle groups. Change from standard to resistance bike.

Exercise in a swimming pool may be just what you need to recover from a knee injury.

Limit range of motion

Lowering your step bench or reducing the depth of steps on a stepping machine are ways of limiting range of motion. Another example is doing half instead of full squats.

Bypass injured part

A sprained ankle shouldn't stop you from doing upper body exercises while seated on a gym bench. Nor should it stop you from doing lower body exercises while lying down (except those that involve pressure on the foot like a leg press machine). Examples are abdominal curls, side leg lifts, inner thigh lifts, etc.

If you have an injured shoulder, don't use your arms while doing aerobics. You'll still get a good cardiovascular workout just using your legs.

Let pain guide you

Pain is a built-in warning device. Your body will tell you when you can safely resume your workout routine. Of course, this doesn't let those perspiration. You shouldn't work back to your step or kickboxing aerobics class. Or 10 minutes. See how your ankle feels during the class, after the class and the next day. If there is no pain or swelling, add another five minutes on your next workout. Continue listening to what your body tells you until you are back to where you started before the injury.

Watch your diet

Since you are probably not burning the same amount of calories as you did before, it is wise to watch your diet to maintain your weight. Remove sources of excess calories that aren't necessary for your health—soft drinks, junk food, soft drinks, etc.

Play detective

Track down the root source of your chronic injury. Sometimes the wrong athletic shoes or tight ones that are old and worn out. Just wrong the injured area doesn't always solve your problem.

If you don't identify what really caused the injury, it might just happen again when you return to your exercise routine. The best people to help you uncover the source are your medical specialist and fitness instructor.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Double back leg lift on stability ball

This advanced exercise works the buttocks and hamstrings.

Equipment:
Stability ball. You can also do this exercise on the side of a low bed.

Exercise technique:
1. Kneel down with the ball in front of you.

2. Place your torso on the ball and roll forward until you have both forearms on the floor. Your legs should be straight behind you on your toes.

3. Contract your buttocks and lift both legs.

4. Slowly lower down. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:
1. Exhale as you lift your legs; inhale as you lower them down.

2. Look down at the floor but keep your neck in line with your spine.

3. Lift your legs with control. Contract your buttocks muscles first before lifting.

4. To make the exercise hard, try ankle weights.

Repetitions:
Do 10 repetitions.

BADMINTON
Court shoes and outfits to look forward to for next year's jump smashes. On Juan: Nike Balance dark-blue sleeveless top paired with light blue workout shorts and Wave Smash RF Mizuno shoes (2003). On Carlo: MB jumpsuit top, rusty-knit shorts and Wave Lightning 3 Mizuno shoes (2003). On Bobbie: Nike tank-halter top in blue, pouch workout shorts and Wave Jungle Mizuno shoes (2003)

WOMEN RUNNING
New Balance pouch-tanks tank top with pouch and gray cropped pants; 1400 heart rate monitor sports watch by Timex

New year, new gear!

By Gem Padilla
Classifieder

DON'T let 2005's fitness resolutions end up in the backburner. Jumpstart the coming new year with athletic gear that will make you look forward with anticipation to hitting the gym, the track or the court.

These collections from the top athletic brands employ state-of-the-art technology and have the latest in sweat-wicking materials, sport specific designs and cool colors, all in a bid to get your attention.

YOGA
Stretch and relax with Nike's sweat-wicking yoga pants paired with pouch cardio tank, or go for the white exercise tank with black and white cardio pants.

BASKETBALL
Nike one-on-one. Dri-fit air tank and dri-fit air shorts in black and white, versus the force reversible tank in green paired with grey cotton baggy shorts.

AT THE JUICE BAR
On Prasoto: Adidas crush suit. On Juan: Nike pullover, New Balance shorts, Mizuno court shoes and Nike: Kiro yoga mini bag. On Bobbie: Nike reversible/detachable jacket, New Balance shorts, Mizuno court shoes and Nike women's versatility tote bag. On Ariel: Nike green reversible tank, coordinating and white reaction fit ball pants with ball buttons, white and dark cypress jacket

RUNNING
Breeze through a 10km run with New Balance sleeveless phantom top with long kataza shorts. Running shoes by Mizuno, Wave Rider (2003)

STRENGTH TRAINING
Tone those muscles Adidas-style. Women's sports tank in black paired with Adidas women's track capri pants.

BASKETBALL
The MVP look—Adidas basketball tank, Chelsea shorts and CoolResponse training shoes

NICOLE Hernandez about to board the beauty bus

SAMANTHA Mclaughlin and Georgina Wilson inside the Proud's Beauty Bus

Oil's well—but not on your face

ANDY Maccow on the Beauty Bus, a rolling facial spa center

By Jenna Victoria
Contributor

Nine months ago, Tito was the mantra repeated over and over during the launch of the new and improved Proud's Oil and Blemish Control Facial Washes at Oceanfront retailers.

"The skin of the body is different from the skin of the face," explained leading skin specialist Dr. Vida Jeter. "Bobo soap doesn't do women's makeup... Oil drops the pore, creating zits. This is why you shouldn't use bobo soap on your face."

Aside from this, "bobo soaps have a tendency to dry your skin, causing your oil glands to produce even more oil to compensate," added Proud's assistant brand manager Gerry Bliss.

Okay, so the bobo soap should be kept away from the face.

But what can be done about frustrating weather and, most importantly, the pollution in the cities? There are also leading causes of oily and pimply skin in the summer.

The solution we chose will take many years of research but, for now, Proud's offers a quick relief to every overworked who cannot afford to spend an hour at the let's. Proud's also introduced the Beauty Bus, a mod vehicle converted from a facial spa center where women can have free facial massages and consultations.

Natural beauty aids from the Proud's line will give a short refreshing treat. They start by cleaning the canvas with the scent of lemon lemon. A cold cream deep cleansing massage follows. The procedure is capped with, of course, the new Proud's Oil & Blemish Control Facial Wash.

To get on the bus, interested people can simply present any proud of purchase of this new product.

If you take the Beauty Bus, you can catch Proud's Refreshing Facial Spa on its mall tour: Nov. 19-21, Chesapeake; Dec. 4-5, Hampton Place, Rhonda; Dec. 11-12, 200 Regency; Dec. 16-19, SM North; Jan. 4-5, Pembroke Place; and Jan. 15-16, SM Harbor.

Healthy body needs harmony

WELLNESS is the harmony of body, mind and spirit. It isn't enough to achieve a healthy body for if it holds a negative mind and spirit eventually illness will be the result. Body, mind and spirit are inseparable and harmoniously one so let's tackle some new approaches and information to ensure a better state of wellness.

INSIDE OUT

Gary Gimenez

Body

Vitamins are good for you. What vitamin and mineral supplements to take depend on your age, sex, lifestyle, dietary needs/requirements and stress factors. Sometimes major events in your life such as emotional/physical trauma, illness, etc. can rob your body of its nutrition.

There are many vitamin/mineral supplements in the market today, but make sure you get the range of nutritional coverage.

Here are some things to remember:

+ Large doses of Vitamin A can lead to dermatological problems and birth defects. Recommended dose: males—1,000 IU to 5,000 IU daily for adult males; females—800 IU to 4,000 IU. The safest form of Vitamin A is betacarotene.

+ High doses of Vitamin C affect B12 and folic acid absorption, therefore make sure you are taking the required daily allowances for both.

+ Herbs can help enhance your body's. However, never take a natural product without knowing what it does to the body. People on optimal weight-loss plans turn to tea-based *Garcinia* herb to speed up metabolism (for burning energy).

Ma-huang is a remedy for asthma, colds and respiratory ailments. It contains ephedra (which has ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine). If taken in excess, *ma-huang* can cause rapid heart beat and raised blood pressure. Do not take it if you have heart problems.

+ Muscle burns fat. The more you exercise, the more fat you burn. Design a lifestyle where you are active and moving around all the time. Adopt the "do it yourself" habit. Instead of asking someone to get you a cup of coffee or to answer the phone, stand up and burn your calories. Take brisk early morning walks daily to boost your system and as a great way to start your day.

Mind

If your mind is to be more successful, strong and fulfilled, start talking like you are. Susan Albert, Ph.D., author of "Feel the fear and be it anyway," says "If we replace pain words with power words, it changes our attitude and outlook."

Pain phrases; Power phrases

I can't; I won't; I should; I could
I hope; I know
If only; Next time

It's not my fault; I'm responsible
It's a problem; It's an opportunity
What will I do?; I can handle it.
Life's a struggle; Life's an adventure

Spirit:

If you want to lower your spirits, a fundamental change happens to your body. Deepak Chopra, M.D., says, "Emotions are not fleeting events isolated in mental space. They are **expressions of awareness**, the fundamental stuff of life. In all religious traditions, the breath of life is spirit."

Following this line of thought, awareness of one's thoughts and feelings can lead to tranformation.

To be one with your spirit requires meditation and prayer time. Find a place where you can embrace your silence. Calm the mind by shoving our distracting thoughts. Breathe slowly. Just ten minutes of undisturbed awareness each time will transform you with that which is indestructible in you—your spirit, ultimately life itself, your Creator.

Love and light!

Reference: "Spirit: Body, Stricken Mind" by Deepak Chopra; "Vitamin Bible for the 21st Century" by Earl Mindell

Affordable way to strong teeth

ENRIQUE Toothpaste, with two variants, cleans and protects teeth at a very affordable price. It provides a less expensive toothpaste alternative for Filipino families.

Enrique's hickmint flavored variant is formulated with two fluoride protection that controls tartar, prevents tooth decay and cavities.

Enrique double mint flavor, which was launched last year, has Triclosan that kills germs and bacteria and gives long-lasting fresh breath.

Enrique Toothpaste is manufactured by ACE Manufacturing Corp., a Filipino-owned company with ISO Certification, to internationally accepted standard of quality management system.

THE HAVEN Hand Fresh Moisture Cream and Age Defying Q Hplus are designed to give the hands the kind of special care they need. The two new products are specially formulated to keep hands silky soft and moisturized all the time. The light Aloe Fresh Moisture Cream quickly restores the balance of the skin's moisture levels and is immediately absorbed. The Age Defying Q Hplus hand cream contains the exclusive Q Excell Complex that supports the skin's natural functions. It protects skin from the sun's harmful rays with its UVA/UVB filter system.

LIFESTYLE

BATTLEAH vest, bubble wrap around Monica and headband mesh shirt by Sol Fernandez

MTV Fashionista Miss Models of the World and FTV Model Aboard Philippines' Ria Bolivar unloading in the Metro Bella fashion show

HABLON column dressed with brass accents, by Jaki Penaloza

Fab opening for Ilonggos' new hangout

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max

JETTING in to my other home away from home (Bacolod is the other one) was more exciting this time around, as this was among those invited to attend a grand happening of my favorite mall and the place for Iloilo's "in" crowd, Robinsons Place Iloilo (RPI), march—the opening of its eye-catching Paseo Iloilo.

Located at its 1st floor, between the mall and the car park of Robinsons, Paseo Iloilo is to Iloilo what Mabolo Greenhills 2 and 3. There you can enjoy the best fare, entertainment and food establishments swinging Iloilo cuisine, palangguan.

Greeting us was that workaholic and dynamic RPI Mall manager, everyone's palangga, Brilliant Oñate Lumaringas-Tabuzo and her cute-cute staff, all committed Robinsons Iloilo's service weapons.

The opening was in three phases and all hosted by another Bacolod belle, MYC 03 Mirah Parra.

Metro Iloilo's popular source-cum-inspirational, Avery Tinoko, and Carmelle S. Mispa, RPI general manager, lighted the customized torch and switched on the lampposts that beautifully lined Paseo Iloilo, reminiscent of golden days gone by.

Then a lab fashion spectacle, "Woven and Artistic," followed featuring creations of award-winning members of the Designers' Guild of Iloilo (DGI) and using locally woven fabrics. My favorites were definitely those by Philippine fashion design Competition finalist, talented Jin Fuentes, and Robinsons top asset, Don Preisler, the school the eclectic tale of Paseo Iloilo, palangguan.

The last part of the show was the star concert, with song and dance diva, sultry beauty Rachel Alejandro, electrifying the Ilonggo audience. It was such an adrenaline harmony she rem-pet Mayor Treñas and Luigi Gatuslao, to sing and dance with her!

While I scanned the chosen invitees and the sea of spectators from the aisles, I spotted recipes Antonio Go Sr-medtec and Marichel Ongpangco, the first couple of my favorite hotel in the city, Atanjo Hotel. Diado Tan and Bambi Sangua of GMA 7 Iloilo Iloilo's hottest society columnist, John Castigador, with current pal, top party planner Nancy Huertas; Lolit Wong, with her dijoe tee in, daughters, darlings Linda Wong-Montemolin and Cherry Wong, with Terence and Pia Espongon, Marivic Gan, plus loads of others like them I haven't met.... yet, palangguan.

TAKING THEIR well-deserved bows, Bo Parras, Jaki Penaloza, Augusto Ibera-Rago and Sol Fernandez

After the concert, everyone dashed off for dinner to his or her chosen restaurant among the 12 - yes, 12! - food establishments, along Paseo.

Food, fun, entertainment and great compa-

(turn to)

COOL linen ensemble with hand-painted gold butterflies by talented Bo Parras

BORDERS top lady Alice Cruz (left), artist of the hour Bobby Castillo and (far right) Sonny Top with the two raffle winners, Gonny de Guzman of Sugar House and Porky Puno

Fab opening for Ilonggos' new hangout

SOUTHERN hubs Happy Lobrera, Greg Uygongco and Alberto Lorenzo

ILOILO'S society chronicler John Castigador with exec and Manila Bulletin's Ethel Tordesillas

PUNONG Barangay of Ilgy Asbarte Sur Gilbert Garcia, with wife, Iloilo City Councilor Mary Dylan Garcia, and Iloilo City Councilor Jeffrey Ganzon

WHEN RESTAURATEURS MEET Margarita Fores of Cibo and La Tavola's Marilou Sosa

ARTIST Rocky Cuna with Allison David, wife of new DBP chairman Roy David

ANNIE Baron Tuang of Cook's Exchange and Liam Beaviera of Borders

(ABOVE) Aurora Siayan-Darwin, Bobby Castillo and the artist's mother, Dr. Celia Castillo

ROBINSONS Place Iloilo mall manager Dina L. Talens

RACHEL Alejandro electrifies the Ilonggo audience.

ARCHITECT Alfonso Lucero and BLC VP for Complex Administration Tommy L. D

Moving around, I noticed so many eye-catching things that I already chose items for Christmas and birthday gifts for my pals.

Cocktails had the waiters in a high mood and circulating all over the place.

The artistic pack was all in one part of Borders, discussing art. Well, it reminded this art to me, palonggos.

So what's next for Bobby Castillo? Some mega in mind, that's what Bobby foresees his company crossing glass beads for jewelry among other things, a venture that will be on line by early 2005.

Stretched to say, palonggos, Bobby Castillo is on the roll and his future work will be worth waiting for.

Health mag marks second year

HEALTH & Lifestyle, a monthly glossy magazine which caters to doctors and healthcare professionals nationwide, will mark its 2nd anniversary on Nov. 24 at the Manila Polo Club.

Noted motivational speaker Francis Kong will give an inspirational talk during the program, which will also feature performances from guest artists.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, Mr. Ed. Chairman Bayani Fernando, Mayor Mariano Fernando, other government officials, officers of several medical organizations, and prominent names in the medical community and pharmaceutical industry will attend the celebration.

Aimed at advocating healthy living among Filipinos, the magazine publishes reader-friendly articles on healing and disease-preventing lifestyle practices. Aside from medical and health-related issues, Health & Lifestyle also prints articles on dining, travel, recreation and other stories of interest to healthcare professionals.

Backed by a medical advisory board which consists of respected figures in Philippine medicine, Health & Lifestyle has earned the support of medical/healthcare professionals, making it one of the leading health magazines in the country.